S. Korea, Australia among key destinations as China resumes more group tours. PAGE 2

MAP provides $5.2M for insular areas in fiscal year 2023. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 160
MONDAY AUGUST 14, 2023
www.saipantribune.com
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$1

Wildfire damage is shown, Saturday, Aug. 12, 2023, in Lahaina, Hawaii.

AP PHOTO/RICK BOWMER

Maui wildfire deaths reach 89

By CLAIRE RUSH, BEATRICE DUPUY and JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
Associated Press

» Deadliest wildfire in the US in more than 100 years

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP)—A raging wildfire that swept through a picturesque town on the Hawaiian island of Maui this week has killed at least 89 people, authorities said Saturday, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire of the past century.

See MAUI on Page 4

Norita: Audit's findings could trigger criminal case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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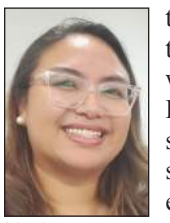
REPORTER

Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita said Friday that there is always a possibility that a desk audit's finding of $11.1 million in questioned costs in the CNMI's use of coronavirus relief funds, commonly known as CARES Act funds, is going to trigger the filing of a criminal case.



Norita

In an interview with the media, Norita said this is why they will be working with the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of the Inspector General to gather as much information and documentation that

See NORITA on Page 4

Kaipat found guilty of rape

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

A six-person jury unanimously found 19-year-old Kenneth Thomas Blas Kaipat guilty of raping his cousin in June 2019.

After just three hours of deliberation, Kaipat was found guilty on nine separate charges for his

See KAIPAT on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Attorney Brien Sers Nicholas accompanies his client, Kenneth Thomas Blas Kaipat, as they walk out of Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan's courtroom last Friday after Kaipat is convicted of rape.

San Nicolas: Tinian Mayor's Office's FTE employees now federally funded posts

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

San Nicolas

Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) questioned yesterday why the full-time positions of employees of the Tinian Mayor's Office have now become federally funded positions when they have traditionally been funded by general funds.

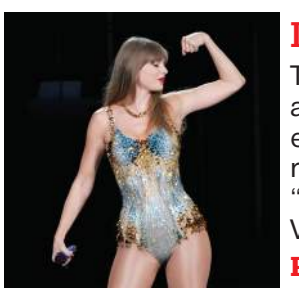
See TINIAN on Page 4

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
47

INSIDE

BUSINESS
DFS Group has launched its most forward-looking beauty event of the year.
PAGE 11

NATION
About 49,500 people took their own lives last year in the U.S., the highest number ever.
PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE
Taylor Swift announces the fourth edition of her re-recording project: "1989 (Taylor's Version)."
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

S. Korea, Australia among key destinations as China resumes more group tours

By PIERCE CHAN
Inside Asian Gaming

South Korea and Australia are among dozens of countries set to benefit after China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism confirmed it will further expand the resumption of group tours, effective immediately. Japan and the United States are also among those included on the latest list.

The Ministry has been gradually resuming the operation of overseas group tours since easing its border restrictions on Jan. 8. The first small batch of nations group tours were permitted to visit was opened up on Jan. 20, followed by a second batch on March 15.

This latest batch is effective as of Aug. 10 and includes many popular destinations around the world for Chinese citizens.

Under the latest guidelines, travel agencies and online travel enterprises in China can resume the operation of outbound group tours and "air ticket + hotel" business to all names countries and regions.

"The overall operation of the outbound tourism market has been stable and orderly, which plays a positive role in promoting tourism exchanges and cooperation," the Ministry said.

The full list of countries named in this third batch is as follows:

■ **Asia**: Oman, Pakistan, Bahrain, Korea, Qatar, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Japan, Turkey, Israel, India.

■ **Africa**: Algeria, Ethiopia, Benin, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Cape Verde, Ghana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sao Tome and Principe, Tunisia.

■ **Europe**: Ireland, Estonia, Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Northern Macedonia, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Poland, Germany, Finland, Netherlands, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Romania, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Sweden, Cyprus, Slovakia, United Kingdom.

■ **North America**: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Costa Rica, United States, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica.

■ **South America**: Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Guyana, Suriname, Venezuela.

■ **Oceania**: Australia, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, French Polynesia, French New Caledonia.

See the original article at https://www.asgam.com/index.php/2023/08/10/south-korea-australia-among-key-destinations-as-china-resumes-more-group-tours/

CNMI getting $9.8M in FEMA reimbursement for pandemic expenses

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI is receiving $9.8 in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for expenses incurred in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan also disclosed in his e-kilili newsletter that the Marianas is getting a combined $1,097,640 from the Office of Insular Affairs for infrastructure maintenance efforts.

» To date, CNMI gets $83.2M in total FEMA grants to cover the cost of the pandemic

With the $9,805,411 reimbursement that FEMA announced Tuesday, this brings to $83.2 million the total FEMA grants the Commonwealth will get to date to cover the costs of responding to the pandemic.

Sablan said the $9.8 million reimbursement covers $8,016,548 for expenditures related to building the Alternate Care Sites and the remaining $1,788,972 is for expenses related to COVID-19 testing.

To date, the Homeland Security/Emergency Management received $66.6 million; the CNMI government for the lost wages program, $7.7 million; Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., $6.8 million; Office of the Governor, $1.9 million; and Funeral Assistance Applicants, $87,531.

Rota ports manager resigns

By KIMERBLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Rota's long-standing Ports manager has resigned, effective next month. She did not cite a reason for her resignation.

In a letter last Monday addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Christopher Tenorio, Rota Ports manager Sharlene M. Manglona said she would be stepping down from her role at the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

Her resignation is expected to take effect on Sept. 7.

"This is to inform you that I am submitting my letter of resignation as Rota Ports manager. My effective date will be Sept. 7. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with CPA family. I've learned a lot and will treasure the knowledge that I gained throughout the years. It has been a pleasure to serve under you," she said.

In a statement from CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, she said Manglona has served as Rota ports manager for years and contributions to CPA cannot be understated.

"Sharlene has been a part of the management team for many years and her contributions to CPA cannot be understated. I want to personally thank her for years of service and dedication to CPA. I wish her all the best and pray for her continued success," she said.

Aside from Manglona, Tenorio has also tendered his resignation, which will take effect in October.

Hazard mitigation plan workshop draws 50 stakeholders

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Representatives of government and non-government stakeholders pose for a photo with workshop facilitators from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency last Wednesday after Day 2 of the workshop at the Grandvrio Resort Saipan.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan to Action Workshop held from Aug. 8 to 10 at the Grandvrio Resort Saipan drew 50 stakeholders and 12 presenters from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency to the inaugural event.

The event functioned as a chance for local officials and subapplicants to learn how to bridge the gap between hazard mitigation planning and building a Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant application.

Last Thursday was the CNMI/FEMA Annual Consultation that addressed the challenges and opportunities specific to the CNMI's Hazard Mitigation Grants Program with local officials.

The workshop was facilitated by the FEMA and the HMGP under the Office of the Governor, with support from the Office of Planning and Development, or OPD, in partnership with the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Phillip Wang, senior grants management specialist from FEMA Region 9 in Oakland, California, was at Thursday's workshop and said that the turnout was a good one.

"A lot of the folks that are participating…are really engaged with this program. So, I'm really optimistic that they're going to move forward and apply for these future grant programs," he said.

Wang said there are two FEMA funding programs: disaster funding, which is available after an event that's presidentially declared, and the other is an annual program that is made available on an annual basis.

In 2022, the disaster funding nationally was about $2.3 billion, and that's why, he said, it's "important for us to be out here because we want to make sure that NMI is aware of this and they're really proactive in taking advantage of this funding opportunities. …We want to do everything we can to make sure that we empower the communities with a large enough information for them to want to really be proactive and build the island's resiliency for the future—so that when something happens—nothing happens."

Deveney Dela Cruz, HMGP audit and compliance specialist, said that, as it's the first workshop event, "we definitely want to see how we can have it evolve and continue it for the years to come along with the consultation."

She said one of the biggest and annual Hazard Mitigation Grant is the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities that falls under a pre-disaster grant, and the workshop walked the participants through what it entails and how much they can avail of it.

"Every single year, the CNMI gets more and more BRIC money. Back in 2020, we had $600,000 available for us—and there's more in competitive money. Last year, we had $2,000,000. With the upcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity, it might be even more. So, we wanted to get the jump on that early before that opens up, so that they can make the most of it and so we can get our islands as much funding for our projects as possible."

Dela Cruz thanked Erin Derrington, lead planner in OPD and the OPD as a whole. Dela Cruz added that the head of their office, Elizabeth Balajadia, who is the CNMI's State Hazard Mitigation Officer, acting OPD director, and Capital Improvement Program administrator, has been working very closely with FEMA and their team to get the event going.

They plan to have the workshop as an annual event along with the yearly consultation.

In attendance at the three-day workshop were representatives of all CNMI's mayor's offices, several agencies such as the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Safety, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Department of Public Works, Northern Marianas Technical Institute, Northern Marianas College, CNMI Public School System, Office of Planning and Development, Capital Improvement Program, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Commonwealth Zoning Board, Department of Labor, Department of Land & Natural Resources, Department of Commerce, Department of Community & Cultural Affairs, Department of Public Lands, NMI Judiciary, Procurement Services–Department of Finance, and Northern Marianas Housing Corp.; and non-governmental agencies like the Marianas Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations and Mariana Islands Nature Alliance.

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Guam mayors thank CNMI for $100K relief goods

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Mayors' Council of Guam presented Friday a resolution to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, and Department of Corrections Commissioner Anthony C. Torres to thank the people of Saipan and the CNMI for sending to Guam two containers of relief goods worth over $100,000 in the aftermath of Typhoon Mawar, which hit Guam in May.

Piti Mayor Jesse L.G. Alig, who is also president of the Mayors' Council of Guam, handed the resolution to Palacios, Apatang, and Torres in the governor's office conference room.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, fifth from left back row; Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, to Palacios' right; Department of Corrections Commissioner Anthony C. Torres, to Palacios' left; and Attorney General Edward Manibusan, second from right back row; pose for a group photo with Piti Mayor Jesse L.G. Alig, second from left back row, and other members of the Mayors Council of Guam, and DOC officials, officers, and staff, outside the Office of the Governor's building on Capital Hill Friday morning.

According to the resolution, the Mayors' Council of Guam acknowledges and is indebted to Palacios, Apatang, Torres, Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho, American President Lines manager Charlie S. Hermosa, and Matson Navigation Company Inc. vice president and general manager Patrick Bulaon for coming to their aid and immediate call to action and concern for Guam and her people as they worked to recover from Mawar's devastation.

Aside from Alig, the other council members present were Inarajan Mayor Anthony Chargualaf, Agat Mayor Kevin Susuico, Mongmong-Toto-Maite Mayor Rudy Paco, and Barrigada Vice Mayor Jesse P. Bautista.

Typhoon Mawar passed north of Guam last May 24 as a Category 4 typhoon, bringing 140 miles per hour damaging winds and heavy rain. It was reportedly the strongest typhoon to hit Guam since Typhoon Pongsona in 2002.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MAUI

From page 1

The new death toll Saturday came as federal emergency workers with axes and cadaver dogs picked through the aftermath of the blaze, marking the ruins of homes with a bright orange X for an initial search and HR when they found human remains.

Dogs worked the rubble, and their occasional bark—used to alert their handlers to a possible corpse—echoed over the hot and colorless landscape.

The inferno that swept through the centuries-old town of Lahaina on Maui's west coast four days earlier torched hundreds of homes and turned a lush, tropical area into a moonscape of ash. The state's governor predicted more bodies will be found.

"It's going to rise," Gov. Josh Green remarked Saturday as he toured the devastation on historic Front Street. "It will certainly be the worst natural disaster that Hawaii ever faced. ... We can only wait and support those who are living. Our focus now is to reunite people when we can and get them housing and get them health care, and then turn to rebuilding."

Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said two of the 89 victims have been identified so far, adding that identifying the dead is extremely challenging because "we pick up the remains and they fall apart."

"When we find our family and our friends, the remains that we're finding is through a fire that melted metal. We have to do rapid DNA to identify them. Every one of these 89 are John and Jane Does," he said. "We know we've got to go quick, but we've got to do it right,"

At least 2,200 buildings were damaged or destroyed in West Maui, Green said, of which 86% were residential. Across the island, he added, damage was estimated at close to $6 billion. He said it would take "an incredible amount of time" to recover."

At least two other fires have been burning in Maui, with no fatalities reported thus far: in south Maui's Kihei area and in the mountainous, inland communities known as Upcountry. A fourth broke out Friday evening in Kaanapali, a coastal community in West Maui north of Lahaina, but crews were able to extinguish it, authorities said.

Green said the Upcountry fire had affected 544 structures, of which 96% were residential.

Emergency managers in Maui were searching for places to house people displaced from their homes. As many as 4,500 people are in need of shelter, county officials said on Facebook early Saturday, citing figures from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Pacific Disaster Center.

Those who escaped counted their blessings, thankful to be alive as they mourned those who didn't make it.

Retired fire captain Geoff Bogar and his friend of 35 years, Franklin Trejos, initially stayed behind to help others in Lahaina and save Bogar's house. But as the flames moved closer and closer Tuesday afternoon, they knew they had to get out. Each escaped to his own car. When Bogar's wouldn't start, he broke through a window to get out, then crawled on the ground until a police patrol found him and brought him to a hospital.

Trejos wasn't as lucky. When Bogar returned the next day, he found the bones of his 68-year-old friend in the back seat of his car, lying on top of the remains of the Bogars' beloved 3-year-old golden retriever Sam, whom he had tried to protect.

Trejos, a native of Costa Rica, had lived for years with Bogar and his wife, Shannon Weber-Bogar, helping her with her seizures when her husband couldn't. He filled their lives with love and laughter.

"God took a really good man," Weber-Bogar said.

Bill Wyland, who lives on the island of Oahu but owns an art gallery on Lahaina's historic Front Street, fled on his Harley Davidson, whipping the motorcycle onto empty sidewalks Tuesday to avoid traffic-jammed roads as embers burned the hair off the back of his neck.

Riding in winds he estimated to be at least 70 miles per hour (112 kilometers per hour), he passed a man on a bicycle who was pedaling for his life.

"It's something you'd see in a Twilight Zone, horror movie or something," Wyland said.

The newly released death toll surpassed the toll of the 2018 Camp Fire in northern California, which left 85 dead and destroyed the town of Paradise. A century earlier, the 1918 Cloquet Fire broke out in drought-stricken northern Minnesota and raced through a number of rural communities, destroying thousands of homes and killing hundreds.

The wildfires are the state's deadliest natural disaster in decades, surpassing a 1960 tsunami that killed 61 people. An even deadlier tsunami in 1946, which killed more than 150 on the Big Island, prompted development of a territory-wide emergency alert system with sirens that are tested monthly.

NORITA

From page 1

they can find. If there is any indication that it should be referred to the Office of the Attorney General, it will be done, she added.

Castro & Company LLC, a public auditing firm in Washington, D.C. that specializes in providing services to the federal government, reviewed and assessed obligation and expenditure data in CARES Act funds for the period of March 1, 2020, through March 31, 2022.

The audit report was transmitted to the CNMI Department of Finance last Wednesday, Aug. 9.

Norita said they will work on clearing the questioned costs and work with the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Treasury. "We will provide as much documentation that we can find and we will forward any findings that may come about that to the AG's office," she said.

As to the question of what triggered the audit, she said she is unsure about it, but what she knows is that when the new administration came in, the audit had already been completed. "So right now they are just in receipt of the findings," she said.

Norita said the questioned costs as listed in their press release are those pertaining to contracts above $50,000 and the lack of documentation.

She said the purpose of that funding is mainly for COVID-19 related expenditures.

The secretary said the $11.1 million is a serious and significant amount of total questioned costs that may have grave impacts on the CNMI.

Norita said one consequence is the CNMI's credibility and also the potential impact for the CNMI to repay those funds.

As to the question of what company or companies could be involved in the questioned costs, the secretary said she does not have the details of the working documents that were used in the audit itself.

"Right now, all the details that we have is what was provided in the press release," Norita said, referring to the administration's press release about the audit's findings forwarded to the media last Thursday.

She said the desk audit report is completed and what is ongoing is the single audit.

TINIAN

From page 1

"This, to my knowledge, has never happened in the history of our Commonwealth," said San Nicolas, who was the only House member present during House's regular session Thursday that voted "no" to a budget bill introduced by Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan).

He said that, as proposed by the Palacios-Apatang administration in the submission of its budget for fiscal year 2024 and in the House of Representatives' version of the budget, these positions—technically called FTE's—are now funded with federal dollars. To make matters worse, he said, the American Rescue Plan Act funds that will fund these positions will expire in 2024.

"Will the administration reinstate these positions in the [fiscal year] 2025 budget?" the lawmaker asked.

Last May, the administration submitted the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget that reduced the Tinian Mayor's Office budget by $2.7 million. San Nicolas said this translates to the non-funding of 124 full-time positions and that the only position funded under the administration's proposal was the mayor's position.

He pointed out that the municipal employees who stand to lose their jobs this October under the administration's budget proposal are the backbone of the Tinian municipal government.

"They have families and obligations," San Nicolas said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

KAIPAT

From page 1

involvement in the brutal rape and beating of his now 28-year-old cousin in a family residence in San Vicente back on June 2, 2019.

Kaipat was found guilty of three counts of sexual assault in the first degree, two counts of sexual assault in the second degree, burglary, aggravated assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and strangulation.

Throughout the reading of the verdict last Friday afternoon, Kaipat appeared emotionless, much like he was throughout the five-day trial held at the Superior Court before Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan.

Because the victim and the suspect share the same family members, the courtroom was packed with half of the people present in tears while the other half were filled with joy as they believed justice had been served.

After the hearing, the prosecution, led by assistant attorney general Steve Kessell, immediately asked that Kaipat be remanded to Department of Corrections while he awaits sentencing as he is related to the victim.

However, the defense, led by Brien Sers Nicholas, opposed, stating that Kaipat has not violated the terms of his release for many years now.

As a compromise, Bogdan decided to release Kaipat to his parents pending sentencing but he is strictly on house arrest, meaning he cannot leave his house unless absolutely necessary.

Kaipat's sentencing has yet to be scheduled.

In an interview with Kessell after the trial, he said he is pleased with the jury's decision as it brings closure to the victim in this case.

"On behalf of the Commonwealth, we are extremely pleased with the verdict. We thank the jury for their service. It's been a long week but this does bring some closure for the family and the victim. We also want to thank the men and women in the Department of Public Safety for their hard work that went into this case," he said.

Saipan Tribune tried to get a statement from Kaipat and his defense team but they refused to give one.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MAP provides $5.3M for insular areas in fiscal year 2023

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has announced $5,298,740 in fiscal year 2023 Maintenance Assistance Program grant funding that will go toward supporting programs and projects benefitting American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the freely associated states: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

"Maintenance and upkeep are necessary for the islands where the warmer weather, higher humidity, and the saltwater environment cause faster degradation of equipment and buildings," said assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. "All across the insular areas, OIA's Maintenance Assistance Program is making a difference in small and big ways."

Projects and programs funded through MAP in fiscal year 2023:

■ **American Samoa: $750,280**

❑ $544,780 to the American Samoa Power Authority for program;

❑ $150,000 to the Department of Parks and Recreation for renovation at the *Tia Seu Lupe or Star Mound Historical Site,* in Ottoville, Tufuna; and

❑ $55,500 to the American Samoa Telecommunications Authority for *the Geographic Information System Mapping and Survey Software & Hardware* project.

■ **Guam: $839,150**

❑ $644,800 to the Guam Public Broadcasting Service to *Upgrade the Power Infrastructure in Support of more Reliable Broadcasting Services;* and

❑ $194,350 to the Guam Community College for the *Increasing Facilities Maintenance Capabilities* project.

■ **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: $1,097,640**

❑ $827,640 to the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for the *Granular Activated Carbon System Monitoring and Maintenance* project at ten water production wells on Saipan; and

❑ $270,000 to the Northern Marianas Technical Institute for the *Fuetsan i Futurata* pilot project to teach and train local laborers in construction and maintenance skills.

■ **US Virgin Ilands: $904,060**

❑ $318,816 to the Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority (WAPA) for the *Water Department Equipment* program;

❑ $210,353 to WAPA for the *Substation Maintenance* program.

❑ $189,000 to the Department of Agriculture for acquisition of a *Front End Loader*, and

❑ $185,891 to the Fire Service and Emergency Services for acquisition of a *Quick Attack Pumper/Brush Truck.*

■ **Federated States of Micronesia: $273,600**

❑ $165,000 to the Yap State Public Services Corporation for the *Pacific Lineman Training Program*, a regional program that includes the territories and each of the states in the freely associated states in the Western Pacific;

❑ $108,600 to the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation for the *Construction and Extension of Pipeline with Power line for Centrifugal Pump* project on Pohnpei.

■ **Republic of the Marshall Islands: $821,242**

❑ $315,000 to the Majuro Water and Sewer Company for *the Pump and Collection System Renewal* program;

❑ $256,242 to the Majuro Atoll Waste Company for Waste *Collection Improvement and Expansion* project on Majuro; and

❑ $250,000 to the Ministry of Health for the *Remodeling of the Section 177 Clinic* project, also on Majuro.

■ **Republic of Palau: $612,768**

❑ $532,730 to the Ministry

See MAP on Page 6

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold its regular board meeting on Thursday, **August 17, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.** The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
 A. Call to Order
 B. Roll Call
 C. Adoption of Agenda*
 D. Adoption of Minutes
  1. July 7, 2023 Regular Board Meeting
 E. Correspondence

II. Management Report
 A. Executive Director's Report
 B. Chief Financial Officer's Report
 C. Legal Counsel's Report

III. Committee Reports
 1. Operations Committee – Water and Wastewater System Updates

IV. Old Business
 A. Amendments to CUC Board By-Laws
 B. Update on the Recruitment for the Executive Director's Position

V. New Business
 A. Proposed Amendments to CUC's Procurement Rules and Regulations
 B. Request for Proposal "RFP" for the Procurement of Collection Attorney Services
 C. Request for Proposal "RFP" for the Procurement of a Utility Billing, Financial, Asset Management, & Customer Information System
 D. U.S. Army Reserve's Request for Billing Late Fee Waiver

VI. Public Comments**

VII. Executive Session*

VIII. Announcements

IX. Adjournment

/s/
JANICE A. TENORIO, CHAIRWOMAN

* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.
** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, to consult with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-022, Rev.1

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF FIVE (5) LIGHT-DUTY VEHICLES

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids to supply and deliver five (5) light-duty vehicles to Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to assist with the project management and inspections for the CUC Water and Wastewater systems upgrades and improvements.

This project is funded by a United States of Environment Protection Agency (USEPA) grant.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-IFB-23-022, Rev. 1 Supply and Delivery of Five (5) Light-Duty Vehicles"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on August 22, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before the submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing n**o later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on August 10, 2023,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: August 02, 2023 **CLOSING DATE: August 17, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary:
2023-014	Human Resources (HR) Manager/Executive Assistant	$40,000.00 - $45,000.00 per annum- UNGRADED

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications at the NMHC Central Office Reception in Garapan, Saipan or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

GUAM & COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WEBEX MEETING AUGUST 15, 2023

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
Honolulu Regional Office- Public Contact Team

Will host a Virtual Benefits Workshop for Veterans, Family Members, Surviving Spouses, and Community Providers
on
TUESDAY AUGUST 15, 2023

From
4PM-6PM (GUAM & CNMI LOCAL TIME)

To participate please join us in Cisco Webex by clicking or copying and pasting the below links into your browser:

https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?MTID=m8078c85271816eff6013c6fabf4e7b39

You can join via Computer, Phone Audio (1-404-397-1596, Access Code: 27600210491##), or Webex Mobile App. Meeting Password: xaCmdWN@326

Benefits Workshop Topics:
Compensation, Service Connection, Pension, COD, MST, Women Veterans, Education & Training, Veteran Readiness & Employment, PACT Act, Home Loan Guaranty, DIC, Survivors' Pension, & Burial and Plot Internment Allowance

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by the NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS 08/14/23

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan MP, 96950
Telephone(s): (670)234-9447/6866

These notices shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after August 30, 2023, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C., for the release of Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 P.L. 116-20, enacted on January 27, 2020, announced via Federal Register Notice, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA) Tinian Gymnasium and Aging Center Rehabilitation Project	Rehabilitation	San Jose, Tinian	Approximately $1,183,958.93 of CDBG-DR funds; no other funds are to be used.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) website at www.nmhcgov.net or NMHC Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com; or on file at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan or NMHC CDBG-DR Office in Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, examined during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI Holidays, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments to the following options: via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net. All comments received by August 29, 2023, 4:30 p.m. will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing the submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Arnold I. Palacios consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Washington D.C will accept objections to its release of fund and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to Ms. Tennille Smith Parker, DRSI Division Director, HUD, via email at Tennille.S.Parker@hud.gov or via telephone (202)402-4649. Potential objectors should contact e U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor of the CNMI

SCS sets Open House & Family Orientation

Saipan Community School will be hosting its annual Open House & Family Orientation Night on Aug. 17, 2023, at 6pm. This event welcomes parents, students, and community members who are keen to discover the excellence of education at SCS.

The event will commence with a warm welcome and introduction to SCS' teachers, dedicated staff, and administrative team.

Parents, guardians, and students will have the opportunity to interact with teachers in their respective classrooms. These sessions will shed light on academic goals, curriculum insights, and captivating co-curricular activities that enrich students' learning experience.

This year, SCS is proud to showcase the transformations made to the campus over the summer break. The classrooms, music room, and library have all received significant upgrades, creating inspiring and inviting spaces for students to thrive.

The Open House also brings exciting news about the progress of the playground project. With one-third of the project completed, students can anticipate a year of joyful exploration and play. The grand reveal of the playground's final phase is eagerly anticipated in early September.

Established in 1976 as the island's first Protestant school, Saipan Community School offers a U.S. curriculum taught in English.

"Our Open House is a unique opportunity for parents, students, and community members to experience firsthand the excellence that defines Saipan Community School," said SCS principal Amanda Dunn. "We invite everyone to join us for an inspiring evening that celebrates education, growth, and community."

For those interested in exploring SCS' offerings from kindergarten through 8th grade, Dunn can be contacted via email at principal@saipancommunityschool.com, by calling (670) 234-6687, or by visiting the campus on Beach Road in Susupe. ***(SCS)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: August 14, 2023 CLOSING DATE: August 29, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary:
2023-016	1-CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist-Saipan	$25,000.00-$30,000.00- per annum- UNGRADED

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) NMHC IFB 2023-008

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: September 07, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Route 206 Road and Drainage Improvement Project, Tinian

Project Package will be available on August 07, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Field Office in Tinian located at the NMC Campus in Tinian on August 15, 2023, 10:00 a.m. In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

MAP

From page 5

of Health and Human Services for the *Belau National Hospital Renovations* project.

❑ $80,038 to the Palau Public Utilities Corporation for the *Babeldaob Water Quality Monitoring* project.

MAP funds are discretionary and may only fund maintenance-related needs and training in insular areas. The Technical Assistance Program, an additional discretionary funding program, may support a more diverse pool of needs benefitting the insular areas.

Funds under both programs are distributed following a competitive grant application process that is open for applications each year in October on grants.gov under CFDA 15.875. More information about these and other funding provided to the insular areas through OIA may be found at www.doi.gov/oia. ***(PR)***

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition to Correct Marriage License and Record of Marriage of

PRISCO ONGRUNG
Petitioner.

] FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0133

] NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on **August 14, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.**, in Courtroom 217A before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 6th day of April, 2023.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/_____
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Inmates, DOC clean up central Garapan

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The Department of Corrections, along with14 inmates, clear overgrown vegetation along the streets of central Garapan.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Corrections has tasked 14 inmates with clearing overgrown vegetation along the streets of central Garapan.

DOC Commissioner Anthony Torres led efforts last Wednesday to clear overgrown vegetation along the main streets of central Garapan, just across Hyatt Regency Saipan.

About 14 inmates and a few volunteers joined the initiative. Rep. Ed Propst (D-Saipan) and House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) also joined Torres in support of the overdue task.

According to Torres, the goal is not just to clear a small area, but to clear up all the overgrown brush and shrubs in central Garapan.

"This is just the start. We will be working in sections. We aim to clear up all the overgrown vegetation around central Garapan," he said.

In addition, Torres said, DOC is also taking the initiative to have portable restrooms placed in popular tourist sites in Marpi.

"We are also in the process of restoring restrooms in Marpi. DOC took their winnings from the Liberation Day float competition and they paid for portable restrooms to be placed in about four main tourist spots in Marpi. This just goes to show the actions and initiative we in DOC are taking to help our community. We are seeing more tourists coming to visit our islands, so we're just taking the initiative to ensure that our island is clean. Hopefully the community will see a huge change in the next few days," Torres said.

Propst said it was great to witness the work DOC and its inmates were doing for the CNMI. He added that it inspires him and should serve as inspiration to the community to pitch in and help beautify the islands.

"This is our tourist district. Regardless of what precinct, department, or island you're from, we all need to pitch in and make something happen. It's great to see the commissioner, DOC inmates, and DOC staff coming out and using their resources to help make this happen. If we want to continue bringing our tourists in, we need to raise our standards, we need to raise the bar and take the initiative to keep our island and tourist spots, clean," he said.

Villagomez is also grateful to DOC for making the effort to help maintain central Garapan, the cleanup of which he says has been a long-standing issue.

"We've done some cleaning in this area but what's difficult is the maintenance. So it's really nice to see the DOC come out to help in the efforts to beautify our CNMI," he said.

CHARITY R. HODSON (F0487)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607 CK Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749 charity@chodsonlaw.com

Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

THE ESTATE OF JAIME AGUON SASAMOTO, aka JAIME ADA SASAMOTO Deceased.	] Civil Action] No. 23-0154] **NOTICE OF HEARING / NOTICE TO CREDITORS**]] Date: August 24, 2023] Time: 10:00 a.m.] Judge: Joseph Norita] Camacho]

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE JAIME AGUON SASAMOTO, aka JAIME ADA SASAMOTO OR HIS ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **Nicole Deleon Guerrero** has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of Jaime Aguon Sasamoto, also known as Jaime Ada Sasamoto, the deceased. The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to the attorney for Petitioner, **CHARITY R. HODSON**, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 502607, Saipan, MP 96950.

Dated this 7th day of August, 2023.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 05-2023

Opening date: August 09, 2023 **Closing date: September 11, 2023**

Location: SAIPAN **SALARY: UNCLASSIFIED**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NATURE OF WORK

The Executive Director is the CPA chief executive officer, serving at the pleasure of the CPA Board of Directors and responsible for implementing the policies and decisions of the CPA Board of Directors. Statutory powers and duties of the Executive Director are listed in the Commonwealth Code at 2 CMC §2127.

Under the general direction of the CPA Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for the planning, supervision, and coordination of the management, operation, and maintenance of all CNMI airports and seaports, as stated in the CPA statue and regulations. The Executive Director is in charge and control of the operation and maintenance of all CPA ports. The Executive Director is also in full charge and control of construction of all CPA ports, facilities, and other necessary or incidental works controlled by or required to be constructed or repaired by CPA. The Executive Director exercises independent judgment in finding solutions to situations or problems in which no clear precedents exist.

The Executive Director is to devote full time to the business of CPA. The Executive Director shall be on call at all times after normal working hours and on weekends and holidays. The Executive Director shall also make recommendations to the CPA Board of Directors on matters impacting airport and seaport management, maintenance, and operation, represent CPA at meetings and conferences and before community groups, service organizations, civic committees, and technical industry organizations with respect to airport and seaport matters, and perform related duties as required.

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Monday, September 11, 2023.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

AMENDED JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 05-2023(b)

Opening date: August 14, 2023 **Closing date: September 01, 2023**

Location:	**SAIPAN**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(1) Airport Manager	UNGRADED
	(1) ARFF Mechanic II	PL 6/1 to 6/12 ($9.27/hr to $15.85/hr)
	(1) AOA Controller I	PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr to $15.10/hr)
	(1) Master Electrician	PL 19/1 to 19/12 ($17.48/hr to $29.90/hr)
Location:	**TINIAN**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(2) Ports Police/ARFF Trainee	PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr)
Location:	**ROTA**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(1) Rota Ports Manager	UNGRADED
	(2) Custodial/Maintenance-I	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr. to $13.04/hr.)
	(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance I	PL 5/1 to 5/12($8.83/hr. to $15.10/hr.)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or ***CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, September 01, 2023.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) NMHC IFB 2023-009

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: September 13, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Tinian Children's Park Improvement Project

Project Package will be available on August 14, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks, and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Field Office in Tinian located at the NMC Campus in Tinian on **August 25, 2023, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 160

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

First-time drug offenders deserve a second chance

American society continues to struggle with the question of how to fairly and compassionately deal with people addicted to drugs. Even though this is a complicated area of public policy, it's reassuring to see Republicans and Democrats in Congress looking for spots of consensus that can improve outcomes for low-level, nonviolent offenders who enter the federal criminal justice system.

Under current law, a person found guilty of a federal charge of simple drug possession—meaning a small quantity for personal use, and not for dealing—can request probation if this is the person's first and only drug offense. After the person successfully completes probation, a federal judge can dismiss the case. The arrest and disposition would still show up in a public records search. However, the law does allow people younger than 21 to get the criminal record expunged.

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, U.S. Rep. Nathaniel Moran, R-Tyler, and a group of Democrats and Republicans from across the country want to get rid of the age cap. They're cosponsoring legislation named after a former New York district attorney, the Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act, to narrowly amend federal law to remove the age limit for first-time drug offenders to expunge records.

That's appropriate. A criminal record, even a low-level drug possession charge, can hamper people's ability to land a job, secure an apartment or obtain public aid. It's important for offenders to accept responsibility for their actions, but having doors shut in their faces because of a single, relatively small mistake can destabilize lives and drive people away from recovery and back toward crime. First-time drug possession offenders deserve a second chance even if they aren't minors or young adults.

The offense wouldn't show up in public background checks anymore. The U.S. Department of Justice retains a confidential record of the case, only for the purpose of determining whether a person would qualify for an expungement in a future proceeding.

Getting rid of the age cap for this second chance is so popular that organizations all over the ideological spectrum support it, from the NAACP to the Conservative Political Action Coalition. So do the National District Attorneys Association and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Americans should tread carefully when it comes to proposals to decriminalize drug use. A seemingly well-intentioned effort in Oregon to only fine people caught with small amounts of illegal drugs has backfired in Portland, where drug use has burst into the open, according to recent reporting by The New York Times. Overdose numbers are climbing while businesses and residents worry about disorder and aggression from chronic drug users.

The Kenneth P. Thompson Begin Again Act doesn't overstep. Beneficiaries would still face consequences, in the form of probation, while having barriers to their rehabilitation removed. It's a small policy change that can transform lives. We hope Congress will recognize this and act.

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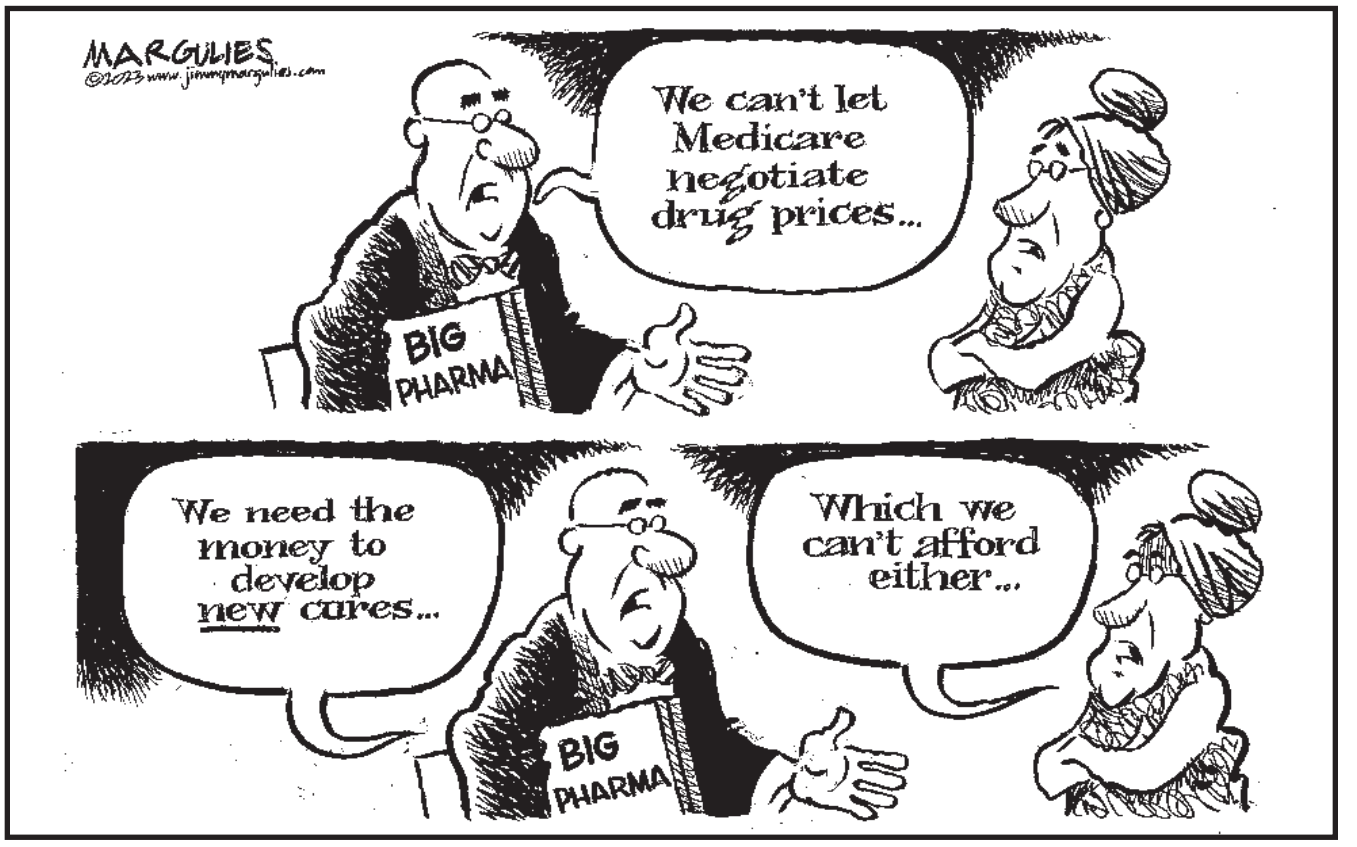


Grocery stores used to be my happy place. Then they started locking up the detergent

By STACY TORRES
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Some people seek a bar or nature hike when they feel low. I go to the supermarket.

My spirits lift as I stroll the aisles. I bop along to easy listening music. Exchanging pleasantries with cashiers lessens my loneliness. I celebrate the small wins—I procured broccoli (OK, and ice cream)—and leave with renewed purpose.

As someone with depression, I find that brick-and-mortar businesses help me avoid isolation by providing a space to be alone with others. But my happy places—supermarkets and pharmacies—say they have seen increasing theft and violence.

Locked glass cabinets safeguarding merchandise are now ubiquitous in chains like Target, Walmart and Walgreens. Asking clerks to retrieve detergent and baby formula is demoralizing enough, but businesses are implementing more severe security measures that erode customers' spirits and our social fabric, even though it's unclear whether shoplifting has become the national crisis that some retailers claim.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
People shop at a grocery supermarket in Alhambra, California, on July 13, 2022.

A grocery run shouldn't feel like visiting a prison, but that's the vibe shoppers get from extreme anti-theft measures at a Safeway in Oakland's Rockridge neighborhood. Reddit users have described them as "jarring" and "hostile."

At the Rockridge Safeway, sad lettuce sits behind 4-foot-high bars surrounding the store entrance. A guard presides over an automatic gate that opens upon approach and alarms sound if you try to exit the same way. Similar barriers at each register pen in customers. And don't toss that receipt at self-checkout—you'll need to scan it before you can leave.

Is this the grim future of grocery shopping? I hope not.

Safeway has since expanded these security measures to other locations in Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose. While tactics such as these are intended to uphold the norms against stealing, they in fact threaten community morale, trust and social cohesion.

With mental distress and loneliness on the rise, social disconnection poses health risks as deadly as smoking. To counteract this, the U.S. surgeon general urges investments in social programming, the built environment and neighborhood places such as libraries and parks. Sociologist Eric Klinenberg similarly argues, "Social infrastructure is crucially important, because local, face-to face interactions—at the school, the playground and the corner diner—are the building blocks of all public life."

Under hospitable conditions, we transform seemingly mundane retail spaces into community "third places." Eating areas, public restrooms and benches facilitate such "placemaking," and research shows third places promote greater social cohesion and neighbor interaction. Ideally, they embed us in webs of supportive connections. For example, when I couldn't reach my 94-year-old friend who lives alone and has memory problems, a supermarket pharmacy clerk passed on information picked up through the neighborhood grapevine that helped me track her down in a nursing home, where she had ended up after a fall.

Grocery stores feed our bodies but should also nourish sociability, not strip our dignity. Companies claim the new security measures make customers feel safer, but they risk molding us into more anxious, suspicious people. This psychic weight has unequal consequences—those with money and tech savvy can just shop online. Others who rely on in-person shopping face disproportionate dehumanization.

Organized retail theft and smaller-scale shoplifting are complex problems that require multipronged solutions. But it's unclear if beefed-up security measures are actually helping to solve these problems. And without addressing socioeconomic conditions such as inflation, poverty and opportunity deficits, the help they do provide serves merely as a Band-Aid. Short- and long-term investments in our social safety net, including restoring SNAP benefits slashed for millions in March, and ensuring access to high-quality education, job training and a living wage, will alleviate economic desperation.

One powerful law enforcement tool to assist merchants is the bipartisan Combating Organized Retail Crime Act, currently pending in both houses of Congress, which would give federal prosecutors the authority to fight money laundering connected to large-scale theft and establish a federal coordination center to ease information sharing among investigators at all levels of government and affected businesses.

Informal observations of supermarkets I frequent, including

See GROCERY on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Maui's wildfires: A CNMI warning

The truth of the matter is we in the Kagman peninsula are hanging by a thread when it comes to a natural disaster occurring on the peninsula. I missed Mass to meet the deadline for this to be in Monday's paper in hopes the timing is right to make our leaders listen.

History has taught us that governments often fail in their fiduciary duty to protect people even when they are warned of impending dangers. Maui officials were warned about their inadequate emergency response system for the people and their system failed to warn the people, with 80 dead and anticipating more. We can't ignore the oversight of no alternate exit like in buildings and we can't depend on Facebook to warn everyone. We only have one siren at MHS when we need sirens all over the island, with only one road out of Kagman. I'm hoping and praying the failure in Maui's warning system for evacuation failure will put our leaders on notice to do something before it's too late.

I have periodically written about the need for an alternate route out of Kagman for nearly two decades and the Maui fires reminded me of how important this matter is for the people of Kagman. Instead of working to make Ambrose look bad, our leaders need to be adults—man/woman enough to admit Ambrose is right and try to get it done, as this will surely be another "I told you so" even if I'm dead and gone when it happens, just like the many other "I told you so's" that have already proved Ambrose was right!

I'm sure the feds would rather complete an alternate evacuation route from the Kagman peninsula rather than send millions in relief after people have died because they couldn't get off the peninsula. Our first warning took place over a decade ago when a power pole fell down on the hill entering Kagman, blocking the only road out of Kagman for several hours. We were just lucky there wasn't an emergency needing to get someone to the hospital. But we might not be so lucky the next time it happens, which is why it is truly time for our representatives, senators, and governor to get busy doing the work to get the feds to help the CNMI build the all-important alternate route out of Kagman. In fact, the alternate route is already partly done going up to the Juvenile Detention Center, but it needs to be completed and made more passable for cars. Don't let this small issue of completing a road end up being a full-blown disaster, like history has proven time and time again. Time is not on our side, it can happen at any time!

I know, it's just going to be another Ambrose op-ed that the powers-that-be will pretend they never read, even though time and time again I have been proven right. The problem is and has always been the same phenomenon that affects the entire world—Ambrose is not a local. Ever since my warnings about the garment industry leaving in 2005 and no one listened, it has been disappointing and frustrating to see our leaders mess up. Now there are many of my students in our government at all levels and I can only pray they haven't been contaminated by the bias and bigotry of the older ones in our government. I say this because time is on my side, as it's just a matter of time before something happens and the people on the Kagman peninsula are going to be trapped with no way out.

Don't let this warning and the deaths of those people on Maui be in vain, as this is about the welfare and safety of the people in Kagman, not Ambrose; I'm just the messenger. So stop trying to kill the messenger and listen to the message, especially with the vital need for an alternate route off the Kagman peninsula before it's too late!

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

Amata's statement on Maui wildfires

Editor's Note: Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) released the following statement regarding the tragic wildfires in Maui that devastated Lahaina:

By UIFA'ATALI AMATA RADEWAGEN
Special to the Saipan Tribne

Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen is the delegare of American Samoa in the U.S. Congresss.

Today, our hearts go out to the Lahaina wharf district in Maui which suffered a catastrophic loss of life and property. First and foremost, our prayers are with these devastated families learning of a lost loved one, and then all those who will face long recovery efforts.

The Lahaina wharf district is a national treasure, and millions from across the USA and all over the world come to visit the historic whaling town and beautiful beaches.

I commend President Biden on his swift response to make available federal assets to help Hawaii, the Coast Guard and Navy that are supporting response and rescue efforts, and the Marines providing Black Hawk helicopters to fight the fires. God bless them all.

American Samoans have many connections to Hawaii, with lots of friends and family living and working throughout the islands including Maui. Congress will be paying close attention to any additional support needed for the disaster recovery needs, and we are thinking of the people of Maui.

Literal and Figurative Watermelon Therapy

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

National Watermelon Day was on Thursday, Aug. 3, 2023. August heat got you down? Need more fruit in your diet? Get some watermelon, cool it, chill out, and eat it. When I saw a pickup truck loaded with big watermelons fresh from the farm two days later at the small store nearest to my home I remembered. So there is plenty of this cool local fruit (chandia) available to cool you off. Hope you can get it in into your refrigerator. I usually cut it up to fit into various compartments. Here's my watermelon poem translated into some local languages. Therapy for your belly and your brain, to explain, reading about and eating it is not a strain.

When Ripe Watermelon

When ripe watermelon busts its rind
and juicy red flesh can be seen
all the fruits of summer come to mind
and watermelon is the queen
the crowning glory of every picnic
just what every barbecue needs
thump for ripeness to get the right pick
have fun spitting out all the seeds.

An Masa I Chandia (Chamorro)

Anai pakpak i lassas
ya sina un lié i chugó yan sensin agagá
ayu na un hasso todo i man mange na fruta siha
lao i chandia i raraina
este i mas ma guaiya espesiatmente para i famaguon
kada man manu nu man nisisita i chandia
ma dakut i chandia ni para u tungu na masa
ya un luga i pipitasnaū.

(Chamorro translation by Carmen C., a Tinian resident)

Kapag Hinog Ang Pakwan (Tagalog)

Kapag sumabog na ang balat ng hinog na pakwan
At kita na ang pula at makatas nitong laman
Naaalala lahat ang mga prutas tuwing tag-init
At ang pakwan ang syang reyna.
ang namamayagpag sa bawat piknik,
Nararapat sa bawat barbekyu,
Katukin ang balat para malaman kung hinog na
Masayang idura ang lahat ng mga buto.

(Translated by J. Vallejera. Translator's note: I don't think there is a literal translation of the word" picnic" or "barbecue" in Tagalog so like the Japanese, Filipinos tend to transliterate many English terms.

Kun Hinog It Pakwan (Waray)

Kun nagbuto na it anit hit pakwan
Ngan nakikit-an na it maduga ngan pula nga unod
Nanunumduman it tanan nga prutus hit tagsirak
Ngan it pakwan it rayna
Asya it sikat ha kada pagtarampo.
Asya it kinahanglan kada may barbekyu
Tuktuki agud mabaru-an kun hinog nga asya an napili
Pagrisyo pagtupra hit mga liso.

(The translator, J. Vallejera is a native speaker of Waray, the fifth most spoken language in the Philippines. Translator's note: You can use the term pagka-urusa or pagtarampo which means "get together" or "unity."

Lupan Sania A Mau (Mortlockese)

Lupan sania a mau, kilen a sawala
massawan lone en mi par me pukilen
a pwa weuu usun sa pwal anshaanei fansoun le rek
sania i finesamolun finesamolun fan soun
appwesh pwe e kai no lon
fansoun appwesh le rekk
fansoun ohshosh nge mattiuou
pukkilen me le awash.

(Mortlockese translation by Sapuro Rayphand, a retired lawyer and teacher who lives on Saipan. Born on Lukono (Likinioch) atoll in the state of Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, Sapuro celebrated his 82nd birthday on Aug. 6. Happy birthday!

GROCERY

From page 8

Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Cardenas, Nob Hill Grocery, Smart & Final and numerous smaller grocers near my home in East Oakland, confirm that extreme security like that at the Rockridge Safeway remains the exception for now.

Rather than create fortresses that inspire dread, many beloved grocery chains have fashioned their stores into attractive destinations where superfan customers spend significant time and money. Self-proclaimed "Wegmaniacs" wax poetic about exceptional in-store cafeterias, high-caliber customer service and the mini-village feel of different departments. Stew Leonard's theme park-like atmosphere has received Disneyland comparisons for its petting zoos and musical, animatronic displays. During a recent Utah trip, I became a repeat customer at Harmons Grocery, charmed by its colorful dining area with couches and brimming bookcases. Such business practices lift people and profits.

Businesses can also help those in their communities by partnering with nonprofits to connect customers to SNAP and WIC benefits. They could emulate public libraries that have invested in social workers to help meet patrons' more complex needs.

Businesses, in supplying social contact, need our support. But they also bear social responsibility. Those that make their customers pay a psychological cost every time we purchase a gallon of milk will lose money as we start shopping elsewhere.

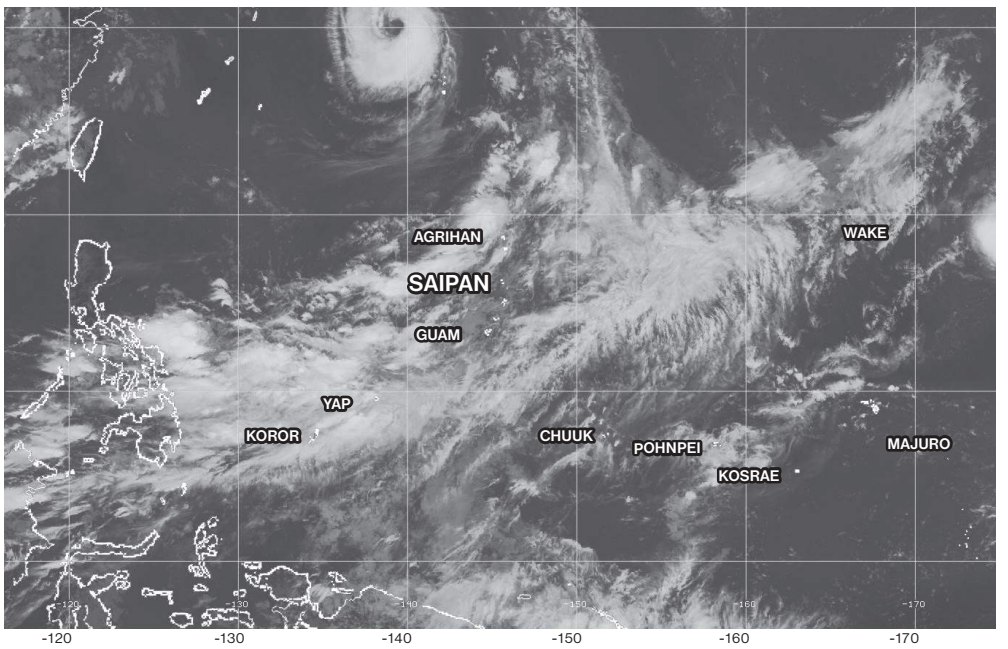
Stacy Torres is an assistant professor of sociology in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at UC San Francisco.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy	Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy	A 40 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86° 79°	86° 79°	85° 79°	86° 79°	85° 79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:04 AM, SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows scattered showers moving through the Marianas Waters, produced by the monsoon trough to our north and east. The Ipan buoy reveals a 2 to 3 foot northeast swell and some south wind waves, which are probably actually southwest, but are wrapping around so they appear to come from the south. The GFS computer wave model projects a west-southwest swell of 5 to 7 feet, giving combined seas of 6 to 8 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲	▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	85° / 77°
Palau	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorm	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	84° / 80°
Pohnpei	Cloudy	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	86° / 77°
Majuro	Cloudy	86° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲	▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	57° / 48°
Beijing	Showers	90° / 68°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	90° / 82°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	89° / 76°
London	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°
Los Angeles	Sunny	84° / 65°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 81°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	57° / 45°
Miami	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
New York	Mostly Sunny	84° / 71°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	95° / 84°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°
Rome	Sunny	99° / 72°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	96° / 76°
San Francisco	Sunny	66° / 53°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	97° / 79°
Tokyo	Showers	88° / 81°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	91° / 75°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:02 AM	6:41 PM
Tuesday	6:02 AM	6:40 PM
Wednesday	6:02 AM	6:40 PM
Thursday	6:02 AM	6:39 PM
Friday	6:02 AM	6:39 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	3:55 AM	5:22 PM	-
Tuesday	4:48 AM	6:06 PM	-
Wednesday	5:39 AM	6:46 PM	-
Thursday	6:29 AM	7:22 PM	-
Friday	7:16 AM	7:57 PM	-

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:48 AM	Low Tide	1.37
5:19 AM	High Tide	1.80
12:52 PM	Low Tide	0.01
8:05 PM	High Tide	1.86

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR 111	6:55AM	8:55AM	2, 6
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	Daily
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:55AM	8:45AM	1, 5
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	2, 3, 5, 6, 7
PR110	11:30PM	5:25AM+1	1, 5
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	Daily
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	Daily
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	4, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

DFS invites customers to explore new dimensions of beauty

DFS Group, the world's leading luxury travel retailer, launches its most forward-looking beauty event of the year. Themed "Explore New Dimensions," DFS aims to redefine beauty dimensions and possibilities, bringing together 15 world-renowned brands to curate a series of exclusive experiences that offer guests personalized shopping journeys leveraging AR and AI technology and limited time offers at T Galleria Guam.

DFS said technological innovation provides customers with experiences that expand dimensions of beauty.

Digitalization is an essential feature of the journey to Explore New Dimensions following DFS' award-winning venture into the metaverse in 2022.

The Aura Perfumery provides scent-seekers with an interactive consultation and an exploration of one's Aura, made up of colors representative of his/her energy field that are uniquely individual. Customers can bring home a complimentary, signature scent that is a perfect match of their aura based on a personality quiz, with limited quantities available on a first-come-first-served basis. The experience uses one-of-a-kind AI to select the scent and generates artwork that symbolizes the customer's auric DNA.

DFS

DFS has partnered with 15 iconic, global luxury brands to bring customers the shopping experience of the year at all its participating stores.

Throughout the month of August, with a spend of $200 or more in beauty, customers will receive an exclusive compact mirror and beauty pouch.

To maximize rewards and increase enjoyment, customers are invited to join the DFS global loyalty program—DFS CIRCLE, through mobile APP (iOS, Android), WeChat mini program, or the DFS website. DFS CIRCLE members will earn additional points* when they make purchases during the months of August and September.

DFS Group is the world's leading luxury travel retailer. Established in Hong Kong in 1960, DFS Group continues to be a pioneer in global luxury travel retail, offering its customers a carefully curated selection of exceptional products from over 750 of the most desired brands. Its network consists of 56 duty free stores located in 14 major global airports and 23 downtown Galleria locations on four continents, as well as affiliate and resort locations. The Group is privately held and majority owned by the world's largest luxury conglomerate, Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, alongside DFS co-founder and shareholder Robert Miller. DFS Group employs more than 5,000 people focused on creating inspiring omnichannel retail experiences for its customers and is headquartered in Hong Kong with offices in Australia, Cambodia, China, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Macau, New Zealand, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, and Vietnam.

For more information, please visit www.dfs.com.

T Galleria by DFS is the ultimate evolution of the original travel retail concept pioneered by DFS Group. The first downtown store opened in 1968 in Hong Kong, followed shortly thereafter by Honolulu and eventually expanding to 23 locations all over the world. Today, T Galleria by DFS has a presence in the United States of America, as well as across Asia, Europe, Oceania and the South Pacific regions. Linked to the notion of travel through the use of T for the Traveler, the brand stands for what customers have come to expect: an expertly curated assortment of the world's preferred luxury brands, exceptional retail environments, highly personalized services and unique experiences tailored to their specific needs as travelers. T Galleria by DFS enables travelers to realize their individual style, one journey at a time. ***(PR)***

Judge sends FTX founder to jail, says crypto mogul tampered with witnesses

NEW YORK (AP)—FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried left a federal courtroom in handcuffs Friday when a judge revoked his bail after concluding that the fallen cryptocurrency wiz had repeatedly tried to influence witnesses against him.

Bankman-Fried drooped his head as Judge Lewis A. Kaplan explained at length why he believed the California man had repeatedly pushed the boundaries of his $250 million bail package to a point that Kaplan could no longer ensure the protection of the community, including prosecutors' witnesses, unless the 31-year-old was behind bars.

After the hearing ended, Bankman-Fried took off his suit jacket and tie and turned his watch and other personal belongings over to his lawyers. The clanging of handcuffs could be heard as his hands were cuffed in front of him. He was then led out of the courtroom by U.S. marshals.

It was a spectacular fall for a man who prosecutors say portrayed himself as "a savior of the cryptocurrency industry" as he testified before Congress and hired celebrities including Larry David, Tom Brady and Stephen Curry to promote his businesses.

Prosecutors said Bankman-Fried stole billions of dollars in FTX customer deposits to fund his businesses and speculative venture investments, make charitable donations and spend tens of millions of dollars on illegal campaign donations to Democrats and Republicans in an attempt to buy influence over cryptocurrency regulation in Washington.

Kaplan said there was probable cause to believe Bankman-Fried had tried to "tamper with witnesses at least twice" since his December arrest, most recently by showing a journalist the private writings of a former girlfriend and key witness against him and in January when he reached out to FTX's general counsel with an encrypted communication.

The judge said he concluded there was a probability that Bankman-Fried had tried to influence both anticipated trial witnesses "and quite likely others whose names we don't even know" to get them to "back off, to have them hedge their cooperation with the government."

The incarceration order signed by the judge said Kaplan found probable cause to believe Bankman-Fried had committed the federal crime of attempted witness tampering.

Bankman-Fried's lawyers insisted that their client's motives were innocent and he shouldn't be jailed for trying to protect his reputation against a barrage of unfavorable news stories.

Attorney Mark Cohen asked the judge to suspend his incarceration order for an immediate appeal, but Kaplan rejected the request. Within an hour, defense lawyers had filed a notice of appeal.

Bankman-Fried was sent for the night to the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, which has previously housed convicted "pharma bro" pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli and convicted sex offenders R. Kelly and Ghislaine Maxwell.

Hawaii Bankers Association accepting monetary donations to support Maui relief efforts

HONOLULU, Hawaii—The Hawaii Bankers Association announced it launched Aloha for Maui, a program accepting donations at any of its member branches statewide to provide assistance to the people, businesses and organizations impacted by the Maui wildfires. Monies collected will be donated to the Hawaii Community Foundation Maui Strong Fund, which is providing the resources necessary to aid with disaster response and recovery. To kickoff the effort, HBA is donating $25,000 to the fund.

"The members of the Hawaii Bankers Association are deeply saddened by the devastation on Maui caused by the wildfires. Our employees, customers and families call these communities home, and we are committed to helping them recover and rebuild," said Hawaii Bankers Association President Bryan Luke. "By bringing our network of branches together, we hope to make it easy for those wanting to help our neighbors on Maui by providing a secure option to donate."

HBA member banks accepting tax-deductible donations at their branches include:

- American Savings Bank
- Bank of Hawai'i
- Central Pacific Bank
- Finance Factors
- First Hawaiian Bank
- Hawaii National Bank
- HomeStreet Bank
- Territorial Savings Bank

Cash and check donations are being accepted at any of the HBA member branches. Checks should be made out to "Hawai'i Community Foundation" with "Maui Strong" written in the note section. Online donations can also be made at www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org.

"HBA encourages Maui residents to follow all official safety guidance on avoiding fire-affected areas, as well as calling their bank branch before visiting, as hours and operations may have changed," added HBA Executive Director Neal Okabayashi. "Our thoughts are with the Maui community during this time of devastating loss, and we stand ready to support in the rebuilding efforts."

The HBA membership is open to FDIC insured depository institutions doing business in Hawaii. Current members include banks, thrifts and a depository financial services company. Hawaii's first bank was established in 1858 and over the many decades Hawaii financial institutions have played an important role in transforming Hawaii's economy by serving the needs of consumers and businesses. HBA members continue to offer innovative products/services and loans to consumers and businesses to fuel Hawaii's economic growth. Many members of the financial services industry spend countless of hours volunteering their time with non-profit and charitable organizations. These bankers have been instrumental in providing the leadership and fundraising support to help organizations continue serving Hawaii residents. For more information, visit http://hawaiiba.org. ***(PR)***

Nation

US suicides hit an all-time high last year

NEW YORK (AP)—About 49,500 people took their own lives last year in the U.S., the highest number ever, according to new government data posted Thursday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which posted the numbers, has not yet calculated a suicide rate for the year, but available data suggests suicides are more common in the U.S. than at any time since the dawn of World War II.

"There's something wrong. The number should not be going up," said Christina Wilbur, a 45-year-old Florida woman whose son shot himself to death last year.

"My son should not have died," she said. "I know it's complicated, I really do. But we have to be able to do something. Something that we're not doing. Because whatever we're doing right now is not helping."

Experts caution that suicide is complicated, and that recent increases might be driven by a range of factors, including higher rates of depression and limited availability of mental health services.

But a main driver is the growing availability of guns, said Jill Harkavy-Friedman, senior vice president of research at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Suicide attempts involving guns end in death far more often than those with other means, and gun sales have boomed — placing firearms in more and more homes.

A recent Johns Hopkins University analysis used preliminary 2022 data to calculate that the nation's overall gun suicide rate rose last year to an all-time high. For the first time, the gun suicide rate among Black teens surpassed the rate among white teens, the researchers found.

"I don't know if you can talk about suicide without talking about firearms," Harkavy-Friedman said.

U.S. suicides steadily rose from the early 2000s until 2018, when the national rate hit its highest level since 1941. That year saw about 48,300 suicide deaths — or 14.2 for every 100,000 Americans.

The rate fell slightly in 2019. It dropped again in 2020, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some experts tied that to a phenomenon seen in the early stages of wars and natural disasters, when people pull together and support each other.

But in 2021, suicides rose 4%. Last year, according to the new data, the number jumped by more than 1,000, to 49,449 — about a 3% increase vs. the year before. The provisional data comes from U.S. death certificates and is considered almost complete, but it may change slightly as death information is reviewed in the months ahead.

The largest increases were seen in older adults. Deaths rose nearly 7% in people ages 45 to 64, and more than 8% in people 65 and older. White men, in particular, have very high rates, the CDC said.

Many middle-aged and elderly people experience problems like losing a job or losing a spouse, and it's important to reduce stigma and other obstacles to them getting assistance, said Dr. Debra Houry, the CDC's chief medical officer.

Suicides in adults ages 25 to 44 grew about 1%. The new data indicates that suicide became the second leading cause of death in that age group in 2022, up from No. 4 in 2021.

Despite the grim statistics, some say there is reason for optimism. A national crisis line launched a year ago, meaning anyone in the U.S. can dial 988 to reach mental health specialists.

The CDC is expanding a suicide program to fund more prevention work in different communities. And there's growing awareness of the issue and that it's OK to ask for help, health officials say.

There was a more than 8% drop in suicides in people ages 10 to 24 in 2022. That may be due to increased attention to youth mental health issues and a push for schools and others to focus on the problem, CDC officials said.

AP

In this Nov. 20, 2015 file photo, a man walks along a trail during sunset near Manhattan, Kan. In 2022, about 49,500 people took their own lives in the U.S.

Biden's reelection bid faces vulnerabilities in wake of special counsel appointment

NEW YORK (AP)—As he gears up for reelection, President Joe Biden is already facing questions about his ability to convince voters that the economy is performing well. There's skepticism about the 80-year-old president's ability to manage a second term. And on Friday, Biden faced a fresh setback when Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel to probe his son, Hunter.

Biden's challenges pale in comparison with his predecessor and possible future rival, Donald Trump, who is facing three criminal indictments, with additional charges expected soon. But the appointment of the special counsel was nonetheless a reminder of the vulnerabilities facing Biden as he wages another election campaign in a deeply uncertain political climate.

There was little immediate sign that Garland's decision meaningfully changed Biden's standing within his party. If anything, it underscored the unprecedented nature of the next election. Rather than a battle of ideas waged on the traditional campaign trail, the next push for the presidency may be shaped by sudden legal twists in courtrooms from Washington to Delaware and Miami.

"Prior to Trump, this would be a big deal," New Hampshire Democratic Party Chair Ray Buckley said of Friday's announcement. "Now, I don't think it means anything. Trump has made everyone so numb to this stuff."

Referring to Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan, Buckley added, "Because of how dismissive MAGA America is to the very real crimes of Trump and his family, it has numbed the minds of swing voters and Democratic voters or activists who would normally be fully engaged and outraged."

Polling has consistently shown that Democratic voters were not excited about Biden's reelection even before Garland's announcement.

Just 47% of Democrats wanted Biden to run again in 2024, according to an AP-NORC poll conducted in April. Democrats' enthusiasm for Biden's presidential campaign has consistently trailed behind Republicans' enthusiasm for Trump's: 55% of Republicans said they wanted Trump to run again in the AP-NORC poll. And Biden's approval rating in polling by Gallup stood at 41% on average over the last three months. Only Jimmy Carter notched a lower average rating in Gallup's polling at this point in his presidency, while ratings for Trump were about the same at 43%.

Judge warns of restraints to what evidence Trump can talk about

WASHINGTON (AP)—The federal judge overseeing the election conspiracy case against Donald Trump warned Friday that there are limits on what the former president can publicly say about evidence in the investigation as he campaigns for a second term in the White House.

Presiding over her first hearing for the case, U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan in Washington heard arguments on how to structure a protective order for evidence turned over by prosecutors, a common step in criminal cases. But she also used the forum to address the case's unprecedented mix of legal and political concerns.

Chutkan stressed that political considerations wouldn't guide her decisions. She also repeatedly said Trump was subject to the court's rules as a defendant before trial even as he runs for the 2024 Republican nomination for president.

"Your client's defense is supposed to happen in this courtroom, not on the internet," Chutkan told Trump's lawyers.

The judge said that the more anyone makes "inflammatory" statements about the case, the greater her urgency will be to move the case more quickly to trial to prevent witness intimidation or jury pool contamination. She noted that "arguably ambiguous statements" could be construed as intimidation or harassment of potential witnesses.

"I will take whatever measures are necessary to safeguard the integrity of the case," she said.

A prosecutor said the Justice Department was prepared to turn over an initial batch of more than 11 million pages of evidence to Trump's lawyers in the first criminal case seeking to hold Trump accountable for his efforts to cling to power before an angry mob of supporters fueled by his election lies attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Chutkan agreed with Trump's defense team on a looser version of a protective order barring the public release only of materials deemed sensitive, like grand jury materials. But prosecutors consider most of the evidence in the case to be sensitive, and she largely sided with the government on what will get that label and protections.

Thomas Windom, a top deputy to special counsel Jack Smith, also argued Trump needs safeguards when he reviews case materials. In another sign of the unique circumstances facing the former president, Windom quipped about the indictment Trump faces in Florida after classified materials were discovered in his Mar-a-Lago residence.

"He has shown a tendency to hold on to material to which he should not," Windom said.

The protective order became an early flashpoint in the case as prosecutors last week called the judge's attention to a post on Trump's social media platform, Truth Social, including a screen shot where he said he would be "coming after" those who "go after" him.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

S. Koreans rally against Japanese plans to release treated nuclear wastewater into sea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Anxious about Japan's impending release of treated nuclear wastewater from the tsunami-damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant, hundreds of South Koreans marched in their capital on Saturday. Protesters called for Tokyo to abandon the plans, and expressed anger toward Seoul for endorsing the discharge despite alleged food safety risks. Saturday's rally was the latest of weekslong protests since the International Atomic Energy Agency approved the Japanese discharge plans in July, saying that the process would meet international safety standards and pose negligible environmental and health impacts. The safety of the wastewater release plans has also been advocated by the government of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who in recent months has actively taken steps to repair long-strained ties with its fellow United States ally in the face of growing North Korean nuclear threats. The Japanese government has said the wastewater release is set to start this summer, but it has not confirmed a specific date. Wearing raincoats and holding signs that read, "We oppose the disposal of Fukushima's contaminated water," and, "No radioactive material is safe for the sea," the demonstrators marched in light rain through the streets of downtown Seoul. The rallies were proceeding peacefully and there were no immediate reports of clashes or injuries. South Korea has been trying to calm people's fears of food contamination and environmental risks ahead of the release of Fukushima's wastewater, including expanding radiation tests on seafood at the country's major fish markets and even testing sand from its southern and western beaches.

Severe floods in China's northern province killed 29

BEIJING (AP)—Severe floods in China's northern province of Hebei brought by remnants of Typhoon Doksuri this month killed at least 29 people and caused billions of dollars in economic losses, its provincial government said Friday. Official news agency Xinhua reported that rescue crews were still searching for 16 missing people as of Thursday and the province's reconstruction is expected to take two years to complete. Initial estimates showed the province's direct economic losses amounted to 95.8 billion yuan ($13.2 billion), state media China News Service said. Last week, Hebei was hit by serious flooding as the remnants of the typhoon battered the region and brought the heaviest rainfall in neighboring Beijing in at least 140 years. Official preliminary estimates announced Friday showed 3.9 million residents, or about 5% of the province's population, were being affected by the floods and more than 40,000 houses were collapsed, China News Service said. A further 155,500 houses and other facilities that provided electricity and communications were seriously damaged, it added.

PH president suspends 22 land reclamation projects in Manila Bay after US airs concerns

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered an indefinite suspension of 22 major land reclamation projects in Manila Bay to allow a study of their environmental impact and legal compliance, an official said Thursday. Marcos's order came after the United States expressed public concern over environmental damage from the projects and the involvement of a Chinese company which was blacklisted by Washington for its role in building militarized Chinese island bases in the South China Sea that further stoked tensions in the contested waters. The heavily fortified U.S. Embassy in Manila sits on the edge of the bay, which is popular for its golden sunsets but has long been notorious for pollution. "All of these projects are suspended at this point," Environment Secretary Antonia Yulo Loyzaga said in a televised news conference. "All are under review." A team of scientists including oceanographers, geologists and climate change experts is being formed to review ongoing and planned reclamation projects which were approved by the previous administration, she said. Environmental groups have staged protests against the projects, mostly conducted by real estate companies seeking to build islands for upscale hotels, casinos, restaurants and entertainment centers in the bay. With a 190-kilometer (118-mile) coastline, the bay straddles the densely populated capital region of metropolitan Manila and several provincial regions.

Record-breaking summit of K2 dogged by allegations that Western climbers left Pakistani man to die

ISLAMABAD (AP)—An investigation has been launched into the death of a Pakistani porter near the peak of the world's most treacherous mountain, a Pakistani mountaineer said Saturday, following allegations that dozens of climbers eager to reach the summit had walked past the man after he was gravely injured in a fall. The accusations surrounding events on July 27 on K2, the world's second-highest peak, overshadowed a record established by Norwegian climber Kristin Harila and her Sherpa guide, Tenjin. By climbing K2 that day, they became the world's fastest climbers, scaling the world's 14 highest mountains in 92 days. Harila rejected any responsibility for the death of the porter, Mohammed Hassan, a 27-year-old father of three who slipped and fell off a narrow trail in a particularly dangerous area of K2 known as the bottleneck. In an Instagram post Friday, she wrote that she felt "angry at how many people have been blaming others for this tragic death" and that no one was at fault. Harila was defending herself against allegations from two other climbers who were on K2 that day, Austrian Wilhelm Steindl and German Philip Flaemig. The pair had aborted their climb because of difficult weather conditions, but said they reconstructed the events later by reviewing drone footage.

Floods triggered by monsoon rains in Myanmar have killed 5 people

BANGKOK (AP)—Floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains in Myanmar have killed five people and displaced about 60,000 since mid-July, an official said Friday. The director of the ministry of social welfare, relief and resettlement, Lay Shwe Zin Oo, said four children are among the dead. Some parts of southern states of Kayin and Mon remain in critical condition due to heavy rains and rising river water levels, Lay said. The low-lying areas in some townships in the southern Bago and the central Magway regions, as well as the western state of Rakhine, have been inundated by water since Sunday. Initially, some 60,000 people were displaced but 20,000 have since returned to their home areas. About 40,000 are still sheltering in sturdy buildings such as monasteries, pagodas and schools, she said.

World

Russia downs 20 drones over Crimea

AP

Police and emergency vehicles parked at the side of the wreckage of the drone fell near the Karamyshevskaya embankment to the after a reported drone attack in Moscow, Russia, on Friday, Aug. 11, 2023.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russia thwarted an attack by 20 Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow-annexed Crimea overnight, the Russian Defense Ministry said Saturday.

Fourteen drones were shot down by Russian air defenses and a further six were jammed electronically, the ministry said in a Telegram post. No casualties or damage were reported. Kyiv officials neither confirmed nor denied Ukraine's involvement in the attacks.

» Following spate of attacks on Moscow

As videos circulated on Russian social media Saturday appearing to show smoke rising above a bridge linking Russia to Crimea, the annexed peninsula's Moscow-appointed governor, Sergei Aksyonov, reported that Russian air defense had also prevented an attack there by shooting down two Ukrainian missiles.

The bridge was not damaged, he said, although traffic was briefly halted. An adviser to Aksyonov, Oleg Kryuchkov, claimed that "a smoke screen was put up by special services."

Russia's Foreign Ministry "strongly condemned" the attempted attack on the Crimean bridge. The ministry said in a statement that such "barbaric actions" by the Armed Forces of Ukraine "will not go unanswered."

Shortly after reporting the downing of the two Ukrainian missiles, Aksyonov said Russian air defense had shot down another missile over the Kerch Strait.

The bridge connecting Crimea and Russia across the Kerch Strait carries heavy significance for Moscow, both logistically and psychologically, as a key artery for military and civilian supplies and as an assertion of Kremlin control of the peninsula it illegally annexed in 2014.

Last week, a Ukrainian sea drone hit a Russian tanker near the bridge, while an attack on the bridge last month killed a couple and seriously wounded their daughter, leaving a span of the roadway hanging perilously. The damage appeared to be less severe than that caused by an assault in October, but it again highlighted the bridge's vulnerability.

Ecuador holds 6 Colombians in slaying of presidential candidate

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—Ecuador will hold six Colombian men for at least a month as the country probes their involvement in the slaying of a presidential candidate whose life's work was fighting crime and corruption, the national prosecutor's office said Friday.

A public ceremony to mourn Fernando Villavicencio was held Friday in the capital convention center, while a separate funeral service was being held for relatives.

"People need to know that his family's in danger and we can't go to such a big event," the victim's daughter, Tamia Villavicencio, told reporters outside the cemetery.

The Colombian men were arrested Wednesday in connection with Villavicencio's killing in the capital, Quito, earlier in the day. The men, whose nationalities were announced late Thursday, will be detained for at least 30 days in the investigation, but will almost certainly be held for months or years as the case plays out.

They face as many as 26 years in prison each.

Villavicencio was not a front-runner in the race, but his assassination in broad daylight less than two weeks before a special presidential election shocked the country and demonstrated how surging crime will challenge Ecuador's next leader. Violence linked to gangs and cartels have claimed thousands of lives in the past few years.

The suspects were captured hiding in a house in Quito, according to an arrest report reviewed by The Associated Press. Law enforcement officers seized four shotguns, a 5.56-mm rifle, ammunition and three grenades as well as a vehicle and one motorcycle, the report said. Investigators said they found 64 shell casings at the scene of the shooting.

Villavicencio, 59, had said he was threatened by affiliates of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, one of a slew of international organized crime groups that now operate in Ecuador. He said his campaign represented a threat to such groups.

Armed Colombian groups have long used the porous border with Ecuador to hide from the authorities in a region scarred by both cocaine trafficking and deadly political battles between Colombian factions and state forces.

With almost 400 miles (640 kilometers) of Pacific coast, shipping ports and some key exports, Ecuador has been turned by international traffickers from a minor player in the drug business into a hub for the smuggling of cocaine from neighboring Colombia and Peru.

A lack of opportunities and decades of conflict have produced some of the world's most renowned hired guns.

Health & Wellness

Enjoying the summer sun safely

By LAUREL KELLY
Mayo Clinic News Network

August is Summer Sun Safety Month, which makes this a good time to learn more about protecting yourself and your family from the harmful effects of ultraviolet, or UV, radiation from sunlight.

Summertime is here, and for many, that means family vacations and spending time outdoors. Exercising and enjoying time outdoors are important for good health, and activities such as biking, hiking, swimming and boating can be a lot of fun. But these activities also require precautions to stay safe, healthy and protected from the sun.

Exposure to UV radiation from the sun damages your skin, and increases your risk of developing skin cancer, wrinkles and age spots. Children are especially vulnerable because they tend to spend more time outdoors and can burn easily.

Skin cancer, which develops primarily on areas of sun-exposed skin, including the scalp, face, lips, ears, neck, chest, arms, hands and legs, is the most common type of cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. This slideshow includes images of several conditions caused by sun damage—some of which can progress to skin cancer.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

Exposure to UV radiation from the sun damages your skin, and increases your risk of developing skin cancer, wrinkles and age spots. Children are especially vulnerable because they tend to spend more time outdoors and can burn easily.

Here are four ways you can protect yourself and your family from UV radiation damage:

■ Time of day

Avoid sun exposure in the middle of the day—between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.—when the UV rays are strongest. In addition, be mindful that clouds offer little protection, and UV rays can bounce off surfaces such as water, sand, snow or pavement, leading to increased UV exposure.

■ Sunscreen

Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor, or SPF, of at least 30—even on cloudy days. Apply sunscreen generously, and reapply every two hours—or more often if you're swimming or perspiring. Use a generous amount of sunscreen on all exposed skin, including your lips, the tips of your ears, and the backs of your hands and neck. And if you're using leftover sunscreen from year to year, be sure to check the expiration date. Learn more about choosing the best sunscreen.

■ Sunglasses

UV radiation also can burn your eyes. Sunburned eyes can feel painful or gritty. Too much UV light can damage the retina, lens and cornea. Sun damage to the lens can lead to clouding of the lens, or cataracts. Exposure to UV light also can increase your risk of developing ocular melanoma. Sunburn of the cornea also is called snow blindness. Look for sunglasses that block both types of UV radiation—UVA and UVB rays. Learn more about choosing the best sunglasses.

■ Protective clothing

Sunscreens don't provide complete protection from UV rays. You also should protect your skin with dark, tightly woven clothing that covers your arms and legs, and a broad-brimmed hat that provides more protection than a baseball cap or visor. Some companies also sell photoprotective clothing, with a UV protection factor, or UPF, rating similar to the SPF rating of sunscreens. Learn more about UPF clothing.

Connect with others talking about sun safety in the Skin Health Support Group on Mayo Clinic Connect, an online patient community moderated by Mayo Clinic.

MAYO CLINIC MINUTE

Building a back-to-school routine

By DEEDEE STIEPAN
Mayo Clinic News Network

For many kids, summer is a time to stay up late, sleep in and hang out with friends. Waking up for that first day of a new school year can be a shock if young children, teenagers, parents or caregivers have not come up with a routine.

In this Mayo Clinic Minute, Dr. Stephen Whiteside, a Mayo Clinic child psychologist, offers some tips for getting into a back-to-school routine.

Transitioning from a laid-back summer schedule to the structure of a new school year doesn't have to be a rude awakening. Dr. Whiteside says developing routines for morning, bedtime and any other recurring event can make things run more smoothly at home and at school.

"Routines are a natural part of life and just very straightforward, provide structure, help kids predict and expect what's going to happen," says Dr. Whiteside.

One way to help make the transition a little smoother is to give your family time to ease into the new routine.

"Taking a week or so before school starts to help kids start adjusting to waking up earlier, getting ready and having breakfast as soon as they get up," says Dr. Whiteside.

Dr. Whiteside says parents shouldn't stress if things don't go exactly as planned.

"Kids need to learn that they can handle change. And having a routine is good. Learning that you can handle life not following that routine is equally good," says Dr. Whiteside.

Healthy Living
Sharp cheese, bland wine
Strong cheeses, such as the ones listed here, can mask the subtle flavors and aromas of good wines.
Cheeses
• Blue, Roquefort, Gorgonzola
• Aged cheddar
• Camembert
• Emmenthaler (Swiss)
• Feta
Tastes lost
• Berry or oak flavor
• Sourness
• Astringency
Source: University of California at Davis, New Scientist, TNS Photo Service

Form of food we eat may have more impact than we think

Bill W. asks, "Is drinking many of our fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds in a smoothie as healthy and nutritious as eating them?"

Surprisingly, even though the whole food we pop into the blender may have the same nutrients as the liquid smoothie, how those nutrients are absorbed can be affected by their form and structure.

A 2019 paper published in the journal Food & Function describes how researchers tested the digestibility of three different forms of foods (solid, semisolid and liquid) that were identical in nutrient content. Then they measured how the varied forms of food affected appetite and specific blood tests in human subjects.

Interestingly, scientists found that the liquid food caused a higher rise in triglycerides (a form of fat in the blood) than the solid food. The liquid food also caused less fullness and satisfaction (satiety) than the solid food.

Other studies (cited in this same article) have found similar results. Ground nuts (peanut butter) have been shown to cause a higher rise in blood fat (triglycerides) than whole nuts, for example.

Why is this important?

DREAMSTIME

Even though the whole food we pop into the blender may have the same nutrients as the liquid smoothie, how those nutrients are absorbed can be affected by their form and structure.

ON NUTRITION

BY BARBARA INTERMILL
Tribune News Service

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating. Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.

When excess triglycerides enter the circulation after a meal, it can trigger inflammation. In fact, these rises in blood fat after meals have been found to increase our risk for heart disease as well as Type 2 diabetes, say experts.

These types of studies are intriguing, but they are also inconsistent because they are so difficult to study. Liquid meals can also be convenient and life-saving, especially in people who rely on liquid nourishment for medical reasons.

Still, it's fascinating to learn that the form of the food we eat may have more impact than we think. Thanks for the question.

Karen W. asks, "Is there any evidence that drinking seltzer water is bad for people with osteoporosis?"

No good evidence, Karen. Seltzer water is plain water that has been infused, or "carbonated," with carbon dioxide. It was discovered by accident in 1767, when a man in England suspended a bowl of water above a beer vat at a brewery. He called the procedure "Impregnating Water with Fixed Air."

According to Harvard Medical School, although carbonated drinks have long been associated with low bone density and fractures (especially in teenage girls), research points primarily to the caffeine in these beverages being a contributor rather than the carbonation. Of course, if carbonated beverages replace calcium-rich foods, this can have a negative effect on bones as well.

"So feel free to enjoy seltzer water without worrying," say these experts, "but don't overdo the caffeinated beverages, whether carbonated or not." And don't let your seltzer water replace your intake of high-calcium foods and beverages in the process.

Thanks for writing.

Life & Style

Taylor Swift announces '1989 (Taylor's Version)' at Eras Tour show in LA

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Taylor Swift closed the 2023 U.S. leg of her landmark Eras Tour Wednesday night in Los Angeles in a big way, announcing the fourth edition of her re-recording project: "1989 (Taylor's Version)."

After playing a few tracks from her "1989" era live, including an abridged take on "Bad Blood," the pop superstar approached the center of the stage with an acoustic guitar in hand and suggested to the audience that she had been working on something big.

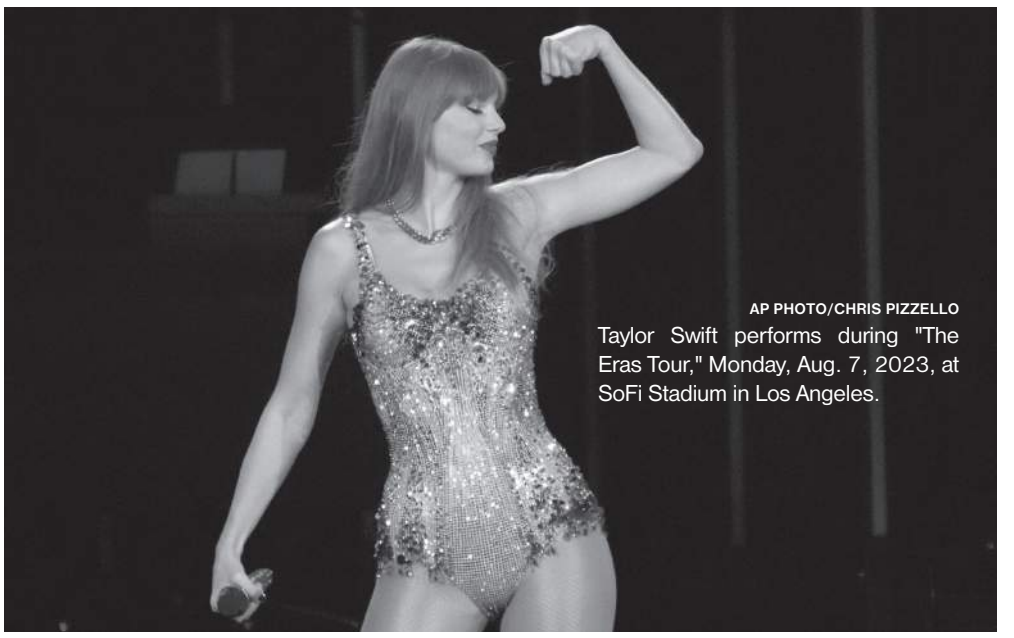
"Instead of just, like, telling you about it, I think I'll just sort of show you," she told the crowd as the screen illuminated behind her. "'1989 (Taylor's Version)' available Oct. 27!" she cheered, pointing out that she was revealing this on the eighth month of the year and the ninth day—a numerical clue.

Then she launched into a surprise performance of the ascendant "1989" track "New Romantics" and the "Reputation"-era piano ballad "New Year's Day" for the first time during her world tour.

Just last month, Swift released her re-recording of "Speak Now" and soon claimed the record for the woman with the most No. 1 albums in history. The "Taylor's Version" projects were sparked by music manager Scooter Braun's purchase and subsequent sale of her early catalog.

Beyond the breaking news, across more than three-and-a-half hours at SoFi Stadium, Swift offered fans a bevy of career-spanning tracks—less a greatest hits collection, and more a live celebration of an artist in her veterancy.

Choreographed easter eggs were frequent. Swift would mimic dance moves from her iconic music videos and crack jokes about her feelings and "women-splaining to men how to apologize to women."



AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO
Taylor Swift performs during "The Eras Tour," Monday, Aug. 7, 2023, at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles.

Openers—and "besties," as Swift described them—HAIM joined her on stage for the "evermore" cut "no body, no crime."

Across more than 40 tracks reflecting 17 years of recorded music, it was as if the ground shook with the rapturous sound of 70,000 fans scream-singing along to her hits and deep cuts alike. This was Taylor Swift's house—filled with fans in light Taylor Swift cosplay (pink dresses for her 2019 album "Lover," black leather and snakeskin prints for 2017's "Reputation," sequins and A-line skirts for 2014's "1989," and so on).

Before launching into her "1989" era tracks, Swift performed an emotive single from her "folkore" album, "cardigan." "When you are young, they assume you know nothing," she sang, contorting the line in the third verse, "I knew everything when I was young."

For a performance predicated on returning to the past as well as celebrating the present, it felt like a mission statement. Throughout her career and her many sonic experiments, Swift has been a keen observer of human condition and heartbreak. Even in those early songs about fantasies and fairytales, she demonstrates a kind of pragmatic wisdom. It is why a song she wrote when she was 16 can elicit the same sort of response as one written in her 30s.

And in a summer stacked with superstar tours celebrating giant new releases—like the larger-than-life experiences of Beyoncé's "Renaissance" World Tour and Drake's 56-date "It Was All a Blur" tour—Taylor Swift's look-back Eras Tour stands proudly among them.

For fans who desire their beloved artist play the hits—she certainly delivered.

Kuwait and Lebanon move to ban 'Barbie'

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—"Barbie" is set to open across the Middle East on Thursday, but moves by Kuwait and Lebanon to ban the film for allegedly threatening conservative values have raised questions over how widely it will be released.

The film centered upon the anatomically improbable American dolls contains no overt sexuality or references to LGBTQ+ rights. But it seems to have drawn fire because of its sheer flamboyance and broad message of inclusion and gender equality in a region where homosexuality is widely seen as taboo.

Kuwait announced its ban late Wednesday, saying the film promotes "ideas and beliefs that are alien to the Kuwaiti society and public order," without elaborating, according to a statement published by the state-run KUNA news agency.

In Lebanon, Culture Minister Mohammad Mortada said the film was found to "contradict values of faith and morality" and to "promote homosexuality and sexual transformation." His request to ban the film was forwarded to Lebanon's General Security agency, which falls under the Interior Ministry and traditionally handles censorship decisions.

The move sparked an uproar in Lebanon, which long was an island of relative tolerance for gay men and lesbians. The LGBTQ+ community there has come under growing pressure in recent years as powerful Islamist and far-right Christian groups have gained influence amid a severe economic crisis.

Across the Middle East, many Muslims, Christians and Jews consider same-sex relations to be sinful. In some parts of the Arab world, members of the LGBTQ+ community have been arrested and sentenced to prison.

In Iraq, regulators banned media from using the word "homosexuality," instead ordering outlets to refer to it as "sexual deviance." A similar order issued by the country's education minister banned the word from universities.

On Thursday, Muslim-majority Malaysia banned all Swatch products that contain LGBTQ+ elements, including watches, wrappers and boxes, with possession punishable by up to three years in prison.

The all-star cast of "Barbie" includes Kate McKinnon, who is gay, and trangender actor Hari Nef. Many in the LGBTQ+ community have embraced the film, even as some have criticized it as pushing a heteronormative narrative.

The Warner Bros. movie has grossed over $1 billion in less than a month since opening in other markets. The film—led and produced by Margot Robbie, directed and co-written by Greta Gerwig—crossed $400 million domestic and $500 million internationally faster than any other movie at the studio, including the Harry Potter films.

It is set to open in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain on Thursday evening.

Both the UAE and Saudi Arabia have invested billions of dollars in sports, entertainment and tourism in recent years. But like much of the rest of the Middle East, they criminalize homosexuality and view LGBTQ+ advocacy as a threat to their societies that must be quashed.

The film's release in the region was initially planned for Aug. 31 but was recently brought forward, indicating that any censorship issues had been resolved. Films are often delayed for release in the region to allow time for production companies to censor them or for committees to review them.

Financial adviser ignores contact preferences

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have some money in a mutual fund. Our new, very young financial adviser, "Alec," seems sexist. He has phoned us four times asking to speak with my husband, and each time my husband refuses to speak to him. Since my name is also on our account, my husband said that I should speak to him. I have told Alec twice that my husband has hearing aids and it's difficult for him to hear people on the phone, which is why he wants me to be the contact. But Alec continues to ask for my husband.

I've told him that I feel he's being sexist, but he denies it. He said he tries very hard not to be, and he's sorry if I feel he is. Alec called asking for my husband again today. We let it go to voicemail. Now I'm wondering if I should return his call and complain again, write him a letter or complain to his superiors. Should I continue to let his calls go to voicemail? Should I complain in writing to him? We don't want to move money around or change our investments in any way, which he has been told already by me, but then, I'm not a MAN!

BEYOND FRUSTRATED IN WASHINGTON

DEAR BEYOND FRUSTRATED: You have suffered enough. Don't bother writing that kid a letter. Contact his supervisor, explain what has been going on, and make it clear that you want someone more service-oriented on your account. If you are contacted by the supervisor, explain in detail your reason. This financial adviser needs more training.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I was adopted at birth. Through DNA testing, I have made contact with my half-siblings, and as a result, I was able to meet some of them and other relatives at a family reunion four years ago. They live 900 miles away. Because of this reunion, I now have a relationship with my maternal half-sister.

Herein lies my problem: A month ago, during one of our bimonthly phone conversations, I told her that she and my brother-in-law had an open invitation to visit anytime they wanted. She responded that she could never travel that far. If anything happened to one of her family members, she would never forgive herself for not being there for them. Well, since then she has traveled with friends to take part in a five-day sporting event 325 miles away from her family. I am hurt because she was very emphatic about not leaving her family for any amount of time. Should I ask her again about visiting and remind her about what she said about traveling away from her family?

SECOND-CLASS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

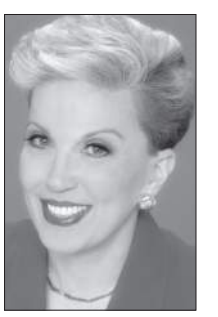
DEAR SECOND-CLASS: I don't recommend confronting her. If you want to invite her again, of course you can do that. But if she's reluctant, rather than put her on the spot by personalizing it, let it go. If you have invited her more than three times, accept that for whatever reason she isn't comfortable with the idea. Rather than a reflection on you, her reason could be financial or limited vacation time—or that a 900-mile trip to visit you is lower on her priorities.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

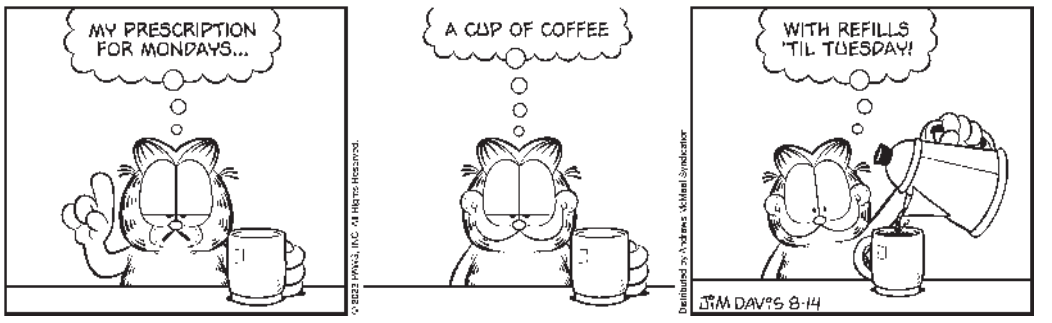
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

IT'S PAST NOON! WHY ISN'T SUSIE WALKING INTO OUR BRILLIANT AMBUSH?! WHERE IS SHE?!
YOU STAY HERE AND GUARD THE WATER BALLOONS. I'LL GO ON A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION AND FIND OUT WHAT SHE'S DOING.
WAIT A MINUTE. WHY CAN'T I GO ON THE RECONNAISSANCE MISSION?
BECAUSE IF YOU GOT CAPTURED, YOU'D TELL SUSIE ANYTHING FOR A TUMMY RUB.
I MIGHT NOT!

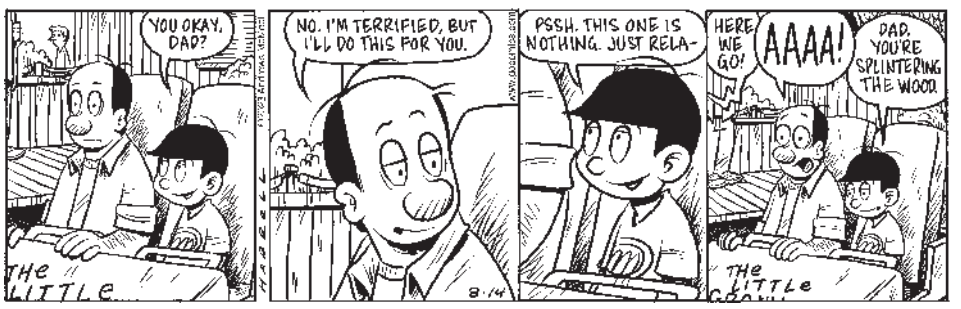
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOU OKAY, DAD?
NO. I'M TERRIFIED, BUT I'LL DO THIS FOR YOU.
PSSH. THIS ONE IS NOTHING. JUST RELA-
HERE WE GO!
AAAA!
DAD, YOU'RE SPLINTERING THE WOOD.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

BARK BARK YAP ROWF ROWF BARK BARK BARK BARK YAP ROWF YAP
BARK ARF BARK BARK ARF YAP BARK BARK
NOTHING'S WORSE THAN TELLING A HILARIOUS JOKE AND GETTING NOTHING BUT CRICKETS.
ACTUAL CRICKETS AT THAT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Emmy winner Alan
5 Green prefix
8 "Sad to say ..."
12 Grump
14 Rain delay cover
15 Peter Allen song
16 Moth variety
17 Med. plan option
18 Front-runner
20 Waffle topper
23 Understands
24 Paraphernalia
25 Prisoners
28 Sunbather's goal
29 Slow mover
30 "What's — use?"
32 Alternative to pasta
34 Native of Inverness
35 Latin I word
36 Group spirit
37 Eggnog sprinkling
40 Flamenco cry
41 Guesser's words
42 Casanova
47 TV host Kelly
48 Private
49 Professional gp.
50 Tic-tac-toe win
51 Raced

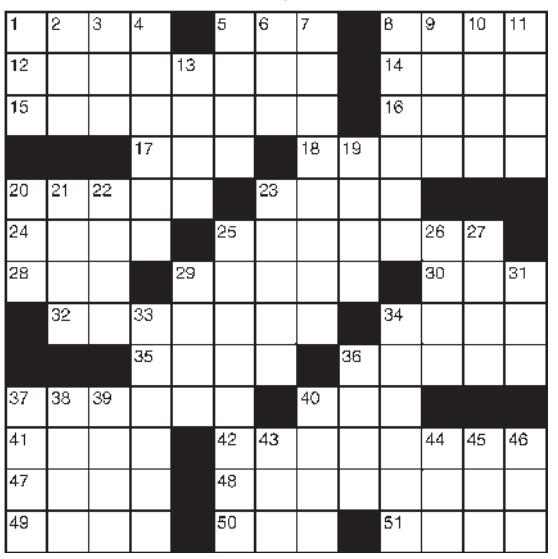
DOWN

1 "— was saying ..."
2 Journal
3 Pair with an air
4 Camelot king
5 Franc replacer
6 Hit CBS series
7 Traditional Italian tune
8 "Finally!"
9 Praise
10 "Alfred" composer
11 Mast
13 Splendor
19 Listending abbr.
20 Boot camp VIP
21 Calendar span
22 Hindu royal
23 Pesky insects
25 Engraved design
26 Engrave
27 "Scram!"
29 Not all
31 UFO fliers
33 Pacific islander
34 Cooks, as dumplings
36 K thru 12
37 Asta's feeder
38 "Topaz" author
39 Recipe amts.
40 "A Man Called —" (Tom Hanks film)
43 Musician Yoko
44 Knock
45 Mineral suffix
46 British ref. work

Solution time: 21 mins.

S	I	A		I	C	E	D		E	Y	E	R
K	O	N		N	U	D	E		T	E	L	E
I	N	D	A	C	L	U	B		C	A	A	N
		R	E	A	P		V	E	R	N	E	
C	B	E	R	S		A	B	I	T			
A	L	T	O		C	L	U	B	C	A	R	S
P	E	T		R	U	B	L	E		N	E	A
S	W	I	M	C	I	U	B		S	T	F	M
			C	A	L	M		R	A	I	L	S
R	F	I	I	S			D	O	G	G		
O	I	A	Y		C	I	U	B	S	O	D	A
O	M	I	T		A	O	N	E		N	O	R
R	O	R	F		R	A	S	S		F	M	T

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mila Kunis, 40; Halle Berry, 57; Jackee Harry, 67; Steve Martin, 78.

Happy Birthday: Do your due diligence before you embrace change. Trial and error will take its toll if you aren't precise in assessing situations. Look for an alternative; having a backup plan in place will put your mind at ease and give you wiggle room to adjust as you move forward. Protect your position, reputation and finances by keeping up with the times and being open to what's possible. Your numbers are 9, 14, 21, 29, 31, 36, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't deny yourself happiness for the sake of someone pressuring you to do something that doesn't appeal to you. Embrace life your way and pursue what you feel passionate about, and you will master skills that allow you to follow your dream. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Follow the dots and see where they lead before you participate. Recognize the difference between opportunity and being used. Make decisions using reason and research, and you'll speed up the process of becoming a success. Avoid a risk offering ill health or injury. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Stick close to home and to those who support you. Refrain from being swept into the herd and micromanaged by manipulating circumstances and hearsay. Think for yourself and protect who you are. Self-improvement is favored. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Put your energy where it counts, and you'll get desired results. Don't fear being different or taking a chance. Be the one to make a move to change how others think or do things. Support your beliefs and be true to yourself. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Use your imagination; you'll recognize how many options are available. Don't settle for less or follow the crowd. Listen to and observe others and you will devise a unique plan. Act on your instincts and move forward with confidence. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Curiosity will open your mind to doing things differently. Test the water before you immerse yourself in debt, promises or risky ventures. Be resourceful, pick and choose what has potential and map out your journey. Build your success based on your needs. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Take pride in what you know, and share information with those you can count on to get things up and running. Don't waste time teaching when action will get you where you want to go. Join forces with like-minded people and enjoy the ride. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Change begins with you; if you don't like what someone is doing, head in a different direction. You have to put your energy where it counts. Be brave and use your imagination, and you'll discover the people and concepts best suited to your purpose. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Follow your heart and let your intuition help you act accordingly. Check out your budget and live within your means. Refuse to let anyone push you into something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Don't take unnecessary risks with your health or money. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Don't hesitate; size up situations and implement adjustments that serve your needs. Embrace change and be vocal regarding budget and plans. The input you receive may seem far-fetched, but with a tweak or two, you will find the perfect fit for your pursuit. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Observe what others do, but don't get involved. Make your way forward to ensure you accommodate your dreams. A partnership is only worthwhile if it magnifies your plans. Eliminate obstacles and do what feels right and comes naturally. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Work toward your goal, look for the best route, and dedicate time and effort to expanding your awareness, connections and prospects. Embrace and adjust to change that is conducive to achieving peace of mind and the happiness you desire. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are playful, entertaining and imaginative. You are adaptable and sympathetic.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5		7	4	9		
				9	3	8		1
		3			1			4
9			2					
7	3	8	1	5		2	4	6
	1				6	3		
8	5							9
3	6		7	4	5	1	8	
2	7					6		

Difficulty: ★ 8/14

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

3	7	2	8	6	4	5	1	9
6	9	4	7	1	5	8	3	2
1	5	8	9	2	3	6	7	4
2	4	9	6	3	1	7	8	5
8	6	7	4	5	9	3	2	1
5	1	3	2	8	7	9	4	6
7	2	5	3	4	6	1	9	8
4	3	6	1	9	8	2	5	7
9	8	1	5	7	2	4	6	3

Difficulty: ★★★★ 8/12

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE MOHS HARDNESS SCALE Solution: 6 letters

C	F	Y	G	O	L	O	E	G	R	A	N	I	T	E
D	O	L	R	Y	H	E	O	H	E	T	I	R	Y	P
T	I	R	U	G	P	L	N	T	G	A	R	N	E	T
S	L	A	U	O	D	S	R	O	E	L	E	S	I	L
Y	A	O	M	N	R	E	U	O	T	R	A	H	C	A
H	R	E	S	O	D	I	U	M	N	S	C	S	C	S
T	E	S	T	W	N	U	T	S	I	I	M	I	S	E
E	N	C	O	I	C	D	M	E	R	N	M	E	M	F
M	I	P	O	L	T	H	O	D	R	B	I	E	G	I
A	M	Z	A	M	C	A	E	R	R	U	Ⓡ	N	R	R
L	T	T	A	T	P	I	P	A	D	A	S	Ⓞ	G	M
L	I	R	A	P	R	A	S	A	L	I	N	A	Ⓒ	S
O	K	R	T	F	O	S	R	D	T	I	N	S	E	Ⓚ
Y	C	Q	U	A	R	T	Z	E	E	L	B	A	T	M
S	U	R	F	A	C	E	T	B	R	I	T	T	L	E

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Alloy, Amethyst, Apatite, Brass, Brittle, Chart, Compare, Corundum, Diamond, Emerald, Firm, Fluorite, Friedrich, Garnet, Gemstone, Geology, Glass, Gold, Granite, Gypsum, Integer, Iron, Kit, Mark, Measure, Mica, Mineral, Mining, Ordinal, Powder, Pyrite, Quartz, Rock, Rough, Salt, Scratch, Smooth, Sodium, Soft, Surface, Table, Talc, Test, Tins, Topaz

Last Friday's Coffee Shop

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Australia makes it through to semifinals seeking history for Matildas

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP)–There will be a first-time winner of the Women's World Cup this year, and maybe, just maybe, it will be host country Australia.

The Matildas, serving as co-hosts of the tournament with New Zealand, became the first home team since the United States in 1999 to win a quarterfina l in nine Women's World Cups. Australia has reached its first semifinal in team history and faces England on Wednesday for a chance to play for the title.

"I genuinely really believe that this team can do great history in so many ways," Australia coach Tony Gustavsson said, "not just winning football games, but the way that they can inspire the next generation, how they can unite the nation, how they can leave a legacy that is much bigger that football."

England, the European champion, advanced with a 2-1 victory over upstart Colombia. England also reached the semifinals in 2015 and 2019, only to finish third and fourth and never reach the Women's World Cup final.

But before the Australia and England showdown, first-time semifinalist Spain takes on powerhouse Sweden on Tuesday in Auckland.

Aside from a 4-0 loss to Japan in group play, Spain has been a force throughout the tournament. It even tuned out an earthquake roughly an hour before its quarterfinal win over 2019 runner-up Netherlands.

The earthquake Friday in New Zealand's capital of Wellington measured 5.6 on the Richter scale and created minor shaking in and around the stadium.

"We were so concentrated on the game that we didn't feel it, although we felt some shakes at the hotel the day before," Spain coach Jorge Vilda said. "The victory of Spain was the earthquake."

Sweden, meanwhile, is the highest ranked team still in the tournament at second in the world, according to FIFA. The Swedes got into the semifinals by knocking off previously undefeated Japan, the 2011 winners and last remaining champions in the tournament after so many early eliminations of the best teams in women's soccer.

"I think we have the team to go all the way," left back Jonna Andersson said, "and now we are one step closer."

AP

Australia's from left, Ellie Carpenter, Caitlin Foord, Sam Kerr and Steph Catley celebrate after Cortnee Vine kicked the winning penalty goal to defeat France in the Women's World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Australia and France in Brisbane, Australia, Saturday, Aug.12, 2023.

AUSTRALIA

The Matildas advanced after a tense — and electric — penalty shootout 7-6 over France in front of a sold-out crowd in Brisbane, Australia.

It took 20 penalties to decide the winner in the longest shootout in the history of the tournament. It was the game of a lifetime for goalkeeper Mackenzie Arnold, who stepped up to take a penalty with the score at 3-3 but hit the post.

Arnold then managed to twice save shots from French midfielder Kenza Dali, the first being waved off after Arnold was ruled to have come off her line for the first save. Arnold said she was "incredibly disappointed" to have missed her shot on goal and thanked her teammates for keeping the Matildas in the game.

Australia, at 12th in the world, is the lowest-ranked team remaining in the tournament.

Sam Kerr, the injured superstar who missed all of group play, came off the bench against France but ended up playing nearly a full game when the match went to extra time. Kerr converted her penalty kick. And the Australians have also been boosted by the play of 20-year-old Mary Fowler, who has stepped in to fill Kerr's void in this tournament.

Arnold said the Matildas need a day to regroup before focusing on England.

"I don't want to ever get ahead of myself, and we're all the same in that aspect," she said. "We just take one game at a time, one half at a time, whatever that is, and we just keep getting to the next step every time. So now that we've made the semifinal for the first time, we'll take a moment to process what we've actually done."

ENGLAND

England very much wants to add a World Cup title to last year's European championship, and coach Sarina Wiegman understands the Lionesses will have their hands full in a semifinal that will be a home game for Australia.

Wiegman's only loss as England manager in 37 matches was a 2-0 loss to Australia in a friendly four months ago. Now in the semifinals for a third consecutive World Cup, England must beat the home team to advance to its first final.

"It's going to be really big," Wiegman said of the semifinal. "It's probably going to be bigger than I imagined now. I'll talk to my players and staff and see what that rivalry is. We've had such a warm welcome and we've really enjoyed our time here in Australia. I really like the people here but that doesn't mean there's no rivalry. So we'll see that Wednesday."

England already has won in front of a hostile crowd — the 75,784 in attendance for its quarterfinal win over Colombia were mostly clad in Colombian colors — and Wiegman said "we expect a similar crowd for Australia.

"We are really looking forward to it. We know that it's an away game," she said. "Let's try to (use it as) an inspiration."

England star Lauren James will miss her second consecutive game because of a suspension for receiving a red card in the quarterfinals.

SWEDEN

Sweden's current team has been labeled the "Golden Generation" of its nation's history of women's soccer, but the Swedes have yet to live up to that billing on an international stage.

Now it has knocked off both the United States and Japan to reach the semifinals and a Tuesday match against Spain in Auckland. Sweden nearly won an Olympic gold medal in Tokyo two years ago but lost to Canada in the final, and in the World Cup, the Swedes were runners-up in 2003 and three-time third-place finishers.

A highlight of each Sweden win has been the playing of Swedish band Abba's songs in the stadiums after the victories, and striker Kosovare Asllani has a request for Tuesday: "I love `Lay Your Love on Me,'" she said.

"It's so nice when you hear the Abba songs after the game. You can't help but smile," she said. "I'm just very proud of the team performance but we're not satisfied here. Obviously want to go all the way."

SPAIN

Spain was the first team to secure a spot in the semifinals with a 2-1 win over 2019 runner-up Netherlands in extra time of the quarterfinals.

Just making it to the quarterfinals was a boost for Spain, ranked seventh in the world but had never before advanced to the quarterfinals in its two previous World Cup appearances. But in their third tournament, La Roja have been fantastic.

Spain blew through its first two games of group play before suffering a humiliating 4-0 loss to Japan in the finale. Vilda made a batch of lineup changes for the knockout round, which led to a 5-1 win over Switzerland, and then the quarterfinal upset over the Dutch.

It put Spain on course for a rematch with the Japanese, but they were upset in the second semifinal by Sweden and La Roja now faces the third-ranked team in the world on Tuesday at Eden Park in Auckland.

"We've reached somewhere we've never reached before, and done it playing a good game as well, with a team that is convinced that we can go even further," Vilda said. "The rival that we meet and face in the semifinals, it will be one of the best teams in the world."

Spain and Sweden have never met in the World Cup — Spain didn't even qualify for the first six tournaments — but played to a 1-1 draw last October in a friendly in Cordoba, Spain.

Japan exits the Women's World Cup but sees progress in young squad

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP)—After the Japanese were eliminated early from the Olympics two years ago on home soil, they rebuilt, hiring a new coach and focusing on youth.

The result? Japan scored in droves at the Women's World Cup.

Led by coach Futoshi Ikeda, the Nadeshiko racked up 15 goals, most of any team in the tournament. Surprising young midfielder Hinata Miyazawa had five goals to lead the field, matching Japanese legend Homare Sawa's record set in 2011.

But it wasn't quite enough to hold off Sweden, which knocked Japan out of the tournament with a 2-1 victory in a quarterfinal match on Friday night. Midfielder Jun Endo sat on the field for a long time after the final whistle, sobbing, as Sweden's players celebrated.

"We knew we were going to play a very skilled and technical team," Sweden's Kosovare Asllani said. "We didn't want them to have a lot of time on the ball, because that's when they're the best."

Amanda Ilestedt scored a first-half goal and Filippa Angeldal converted a second-half penalty to give Sweden a 2-0 lead. Japan couldn't manage to break through until Honoka Hayashi's goal in the 86th minute.

"There was a lot of time spent on defense and it was difficult to find our own pace, and we weren't able to have a good offense," forward Mina Tanaka said.

Ikeda said the team could be proud of their accomplishments. The Japanese swept the group stage without conceding a goal, then downed Norway 3-1 in the round of 16.

After all, Japan's team was young, with an average age of just 24.9 years.

"Since I became coach, I knew I was taking them to the World Cup and I, together with the players, have worked hard to this point," he said. "The players have become one unit, working in the same direction. We created an environment where each player can grow."

In 2011, the Japanese downed Sweden 3-1 in the semifinals and went on to lift the World Cup trophy after a penalty shootout with the United States. It was an emotional victory because of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan earlier that year.

Japan also went to the World Cup final in 2015 but fell 5-2 to the United States.

Ahead of the 2019 World Cup, Japan hired coach Asako Takakura, the first woman to manage the national team, but the Nadeshiko fell to the Netherlands in the quarterfinals.

After the 3-1 loss to Sweden at the Tokyo Games, Takakura was replaced by Ikeda, who coached Japan to the 2018 Under-20 Women's World Cup title. He helped develop many players on the team, including Miyazawa.

Endo, who plays in the United States for Angel City of the National Women's Soccer League. said the Nadeshiko will now turn to qualifying for the Paris Olympics next summer.

'We will need to improve the quality even more," she said.

Ikeda said he believed the young players will learn from the loss.

"They are experiencing the toughness of the world games. They are able to play in these matches. They have to use this as experience toward the Olympics, other preliminaries," Ikeda said. "We want these younger players to add strength to the Nadeshiko team."

Morel's double in the ninth lifts Cubs over Blue Jays 5-4

TORONTO (AP)— Christopher Morel hit a tiebreaking double in the ninth inning and the Chicago Cubs beat the Toronto Blue Jays 5-4 on Saturday.

Dansby Swanson added a three-run home run as the Cubs won for the 18th time in 24 games.

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Chicago's Cody Bellinger doubled off right-hander Jordan Hicks (1-7) to begin the ninth and came around to score what turned out the be the winning run on Morel's one-out double to left field.

Former Blue Jays right-hander Julian Merryweather (4-0) worked one inning for the win and righty Adbert Alzolay finished for his 16th save in 17 chances.

After Vladimir Guerrero Jr. opened the scoring with an RBI single in the third, Chicago replied with four runs in the fourth off Blue Jays right-hander Chris Bassitt. Bassitt allowed four runs and four hits in six innings. He walked two and struck out six.

AP

Chicago Cubs shortstop Dansby Swanson (7) hits a three-run home run during the fourth inning of a baseball game gainst the Toronto Blue Jays in Toronto, Saturday, Aug. 12, 2023.

BRAVES 6, METS 0, 2ND GAME BRAVES 21, METS 3, 1ST GAME

NEW YORK (AP)—Spencer Strider pitched seven scoreless innings and Ozzie Albies homered as Atlanta completed a doubleheader sweep.

The Braves routed the Mets in the opener when Albies homered and drove in six runs and Nicky Lopez added four hits — including his first homer since Sept. 9, 2021 — and five RBIs before tossing a scoreless ninth inning.

Strider (13-4) allowed three hits and struck out six just hours after Allan Winans (1-0) worked seven scoreless inning and struck out nine on the way to his first big league win.

Kevin Pillar had a run-scoring single and Marcell Ozuna hit a two-RBI double in support of Strider before Albies hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning.

José Quintana (0-4) gave up four hits in six innings of one-run ball for the Mets, who were shut out for the 13th time this season.

In the opener, Atlanta went deep six times, running its major league-leading total to 224 homers. Matt Olson had his seventh multi-homer game of the season and the 20th of his career. Sean Murphy and Austin Riley also homered for the NL East leaders, who scored eight runs in the ninth inning runs off Mets infielder Danny Mendick. The 21 runs were the third-highest single-game total in franchise history.

Daniel Vogelbach hit a three-run homer for the Mets in the first game. New York's Denyi Reyes (0-2) allowed five runs in 4 2/3 innings in the first game.

ORIOLES 1, MARINERS 0, 10 INNINGS

SEATTLE (AP)—Ryan Mountcastle's one-out single in the top of the 10th inning scored Cedric Mullins, and Baltimore snapped Seattle's eight-game win streak.

Mountcastle lined a pitch from Andrés Muñoz (2-5) back up the middle and easily scored Mullins, who started the inning as the runner at second base and stole third.

Félix Bautista worked two innings of relief to get the victory. Bautista (7-2) allowed a two-out single in the ninth inning to Cade Marlowe, but he was called out on a replay review after appearing to steal second base.

Seattle starter George Kirby pitched nine shutout innings allowing three hits, struck out seven and didn't walk a batter, but failed to get any run support. Kirby pitched into the ninth inning for the first time in his career.

Baltimore starter Cole Irvin did his part, matching zeros with Kirby through five innings. Irvin scattered two hits and struck out a season-high six.

DODGERS 4, ROCKIES 1

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Will Smith, James Outman and Amed Rosario homered and Tony Gonsolin worked six solid innings after allowing a home run on his first pitch in Los Angeles' win over Colorado.

The Dodgers extended their winning streak to seven games and won for the 11th time in 12 games.

Colorado's Ezequiel Tovar hit Gonsolin's first pitch of the game 427 feet and over the wall in center for an early lead. The Rockies managed just two hits the rest of the way. Tovar finished with two of the Rockies' three hits.

Gonsolin (8-4) allowed three hits, with six strikeouts and no walks. Evan Phillips, the fourth pitcher in the game for the Dodgers, struck out the side in the ninth for his 17th save.

RANGERS 9, GIANTS 3

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Corey Seager homered and singled in a run, Mitch Garver had three RBIs, and Texas beat a stumbling San Francisco.

Garver hit a go-ahead single in the Rangers' three-run fourth as Texas began the inning with four straight base hits against Alex Cobb (6-4). That included the first career hit for Texas left fielder J.P. Martinez, called up a day earlier. Ezequiel Durán added a sacrifice fly and Leody Taveras an RBI single in the inning.

Texas lefty Andrew Heaney saw the end to his career-best 15 2/3-inning scoreless streak and was done after 1 1/3 innings. Grant Anderson (2-1) worked 2 2/3 innings of relief for the win.

RAYS 6, GUARDIANS 5

TAMPA BAY (AP)—Randy Arozarena lined an RBI single to right center to complete a three-run ninth inning off Cleveland closer Emmanuel Clase as Tampa Bay rallied to beat the Guardians.

Clase (1-7) allowed Yandy Díaz's one-out double. Díaz advanced to third on a wild pitch and scored to tie it at 5 on Brandon Lowe's infield single before the All-Star Arozarena won it.

Cleveland wasted an impressive start by rookie Gavin Williams, who struck out 10 over five impressive inning. He allowed one run, five hits and didn't walk a batter in his 10th career star.

The Guardians were without All-Star third baseman José Ramírez, who had his MLB suspension for fighting with Chicago's Tim Anderson reduced from three games to two on Saturday. Ramírez also won't play in Sunday's series finale.

ASTROS 11, ANGELS 3

HOUSTON (AP)—Kyle Tucker hit a three-run homer and RBI single to lead Houston to its fifth win in six games and second straight rout of Los Angeles.

The Astros were up by one in the fourth when Tucker connected off Tyler Anderson (5-4) on a three-run shot. It was his third home run in the last five games. Anderson yielded six hits and seven runs while walking three in 4 2/3 innings.

J.P. France (9-3) allowed four hits and two runs with five strikeouts in his return to the rotation after pitching in relief his last time out.

Jose Altuve, who has a 14-game hitting streak, had three hits and drove in a run to pad the lead in a four-run eighth inning.

TWINS 8, PHILLIES 1

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Joey Gallo hit two homers among his four hits and drove in four runs, Pablo López struck out seven in six shutout innings and Minnesota snapped a four-game losing streak.

Carlos Correa and Matt Wallner also went deep for AL Central-leading Minnesota. Gallo also singled twice and walked.

Bryce Harper returned to the lineup for Philadelphia after sitting out the Phillies' 13-2 win Friday night with mid-back spasms. The two-time NL MVP doubled.

Lopez (8-6) set a career high for strikeouts in a season when he fanned Harper to end the first. The right-hander now has 180.

BREWERS 3, WHITE SOX 2

CHICAGO (AP)—William Contreras capped a three-run seventh with the winning RBI and Milwaukee earned its second straight comeback victory.

Yoán Moncada homered for Chicago, which lost a two-run lead in the seventh a night after watching the Brewers erase a three-run deficit.

Brandon Woodruff (2-1) allowed two runs and four hits over the first 6 1/3 innings. He struck out six and walked just his final batter. Devin Williams, the last of three Milwaukee relievers, pitched the ninth for his 28th save in 31 chances.

TIGERS 6, RED SOX 2

BOSTON (AP)—Kerry Carpenter hit two solo homers and Detroit cleared Fenway Park's Green Monster four times in a win over Boston.

Spencer Torkelson and Eric Haase also homered for the Tigers, who snapped a nine-game losing streak against the Red Sox, one day after losing the series opener. Torkelson finished 4 for 4 and Riley Greene added an RBI single.

Justin Turner hit a solo homer for Boston, which had won four of its last five games and closed the gap in the race for the AL's third and final wild-card spot.

Matt Manning (4-4) gave up an unearned run and just two hits in 5 1/3 innings. Jason Foley got five outs to earn his fifth save.

Brayan Bello (8-7) gave up four runs and nine hits in 4 2/3 innings in his 20th start of the season.

MARLINS 3, YANKEES 1

MIAMI (AP)—Sandy Alcantara threw a complete-game, five-hitter and Luis Arraez hit his fourth homer of the season in Miami's win over New York.

Alcantara (5-10) struck out 10 in his major league-leading third complete game and first home win since going the distance against Minnesota on April 4. The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner induced 10 groundouts before a season-best crowd of 33,986.

Jake Burger and Jesus Sanchez each had two hits for the Marlins. Arraez finished 1 for 4 and his major league-leading batting average fell a point to .365.

Isaiah Kiner-Falefa knocked in New York's only run. King (3-5) was lifted after two innings and 41 pitches. The right-hander gave up two runs, four hits and struck out three.

DIAMONDBACKS 3, PADRES 0

PHOENIX (AP)—Christian Walker hit a two-run homer, Zac Gallen pitched six strong innings and Arizona snapped a nine-game losing streak by beating San Diego.

Gallen (12-5) delivered an excellent outing, giving up four hits and a walk while striking out eight. It ended a rough stretch for Arizona's ace — the team had lost five straight games with the right-hander on the mound before Saturday.

Walker finished with three hits. Paul Sewald earned his first save since coming to the desert in a trade deadline deal with the Seattle Mariners.

Rich Hill (7-12) lasted just 3 1/3 innings in his second start with the Padres after being acquired from the Pirates on Aug. 1. The 43-year-old gave up three runs on seven hits and a walk while striking out four.

CARDINALS 5, ROYALS 4

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Tommy Edman hit two home runs to lead St. Louis past Kansas City in front of the second-largest crowd of the season at Kauffman Stadium.

Edman's third career two-homer game came in front of 37,016 fans, the Royals' largest draw since opening day.

Nolan Arenado added three hits for St. Louis, which ended Kansas City's seven-game home winning streak.

Steven Matz (4-7) pitched six solid innings, allowing two runs on four hits, striking out five and walking none. Jo Jo Romero earned his second save.

NATIONALS 3, ATHLETICS 2

WASHINGTON (AP)—Keibert Ruiz hit the first pitch of the ninth inning into the right-field bullpen to give Washington its second walk-off homer of the season.

Ruiz homered for the second consecutive night to help Washington win for the seventh time in its last 10 — and 11th victory in the last 13 home games.

JJ Bleday and Brent Rooker homered for Oakland, which fell to a majors-worst 33-84. The Athletics are 51 games under .500 for the first time since finishing 54-108 in 1979. They are on pace to go 46-116.

Reluctant but resolute Popovich leads Basketball Hall of Fame class

UNCASVILLE, Conn. (AP) — For years, Gregg Popovich has eschewed the idea of him being worthy of inclusion in the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

He felt others were more deserving and worthy of the sport's highest honor.

On Friday, the man whose career has sprouted basketball tenacles that now span the globe was listed among a collection of basketball royalty that underscored his undeniable impact on the game.

He can no longer run from the inevitable.

Popovich, a five-time NBA champion, Olympic gold medal-winning coach and the league's all-time leader in coaching wins, will join fellow NBA champions Dwyane Wade, Pau Gasol, Dirk Nowitzki and Tony Parker, along with longtime coaching mentee Becky Hammon, as headliners of the 2023 Basketball Hall of Fame class.

"He wanted to make sure his guys went in first," Hall of Fame chairman Jerry Colangelo said of Popovich. "He felt it would be inappropriate to jump the line in his mind. … I'm glad he decided this (year) would be it."

Parker said being inducted alongside his coach is apropos.

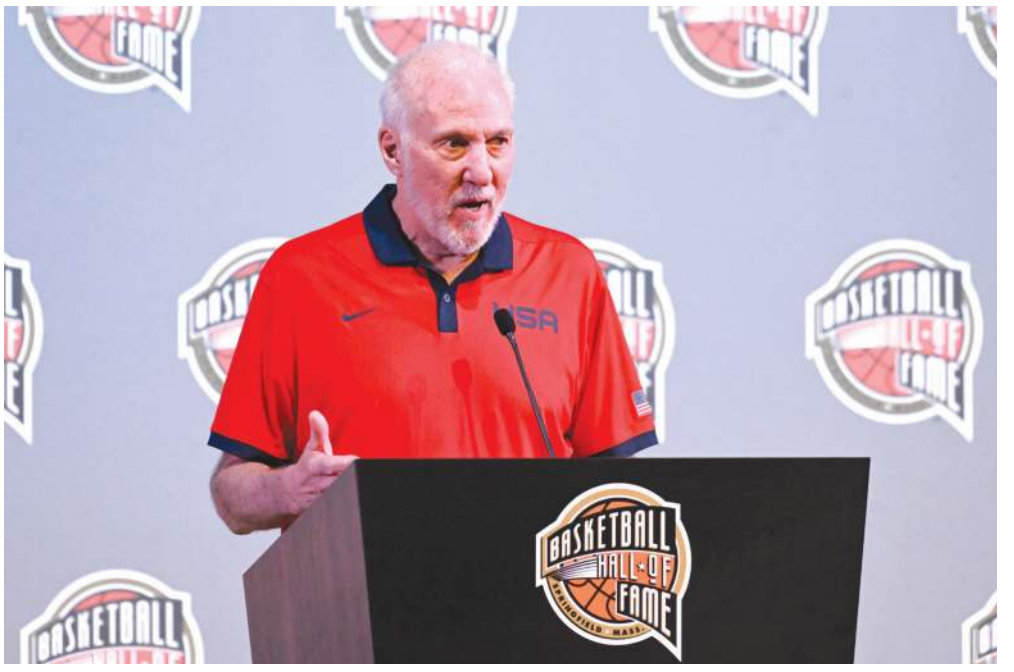
"I just can't get rid of him," joked Parker, who played under Popovich with the San Antonio Spurs.

The class received its hall of fame rings and jackets Friday and will officially be enshrined on Saturday night in a ceremony in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Popovich will be presented by Parker, along with former Spurs stars and hall members David Robinson, Tim Duncan and Manu Ginobili. He puts that group's legacy above anything he's achieved in his coaching career.

"My grandkids go to school with Tim Duncan's children so it's pretty special in that regard," Popovich said. "It's beyond basketball. That's what sustains us when we move through life."

Others to be inducted include the 1976 U.S. Olympic women's basketball team; former Purdue coach Gene Keady, a seven-time Big Ten coach of the year; former Texas A&M women's coach Gary Blair, who took two teams to the Final Four; longtime coach at Division III Amherst and two-time national champion David Hixon; and Gene Bess—who won 1,300 games as a junior college coach at Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff, Missouri.



AP

Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2023 inductee Gregg Popovich speaks at a news conference at Mohegan Sun, Friday, Aug. 11, 2023, in Uncasville, Conn.

Former coach Jim Valvano, who led North Carolina State to an improbable 1983 NCAA championship, will be posthumously inducted as a contributor. His selection also accounts for his work as a broadcaster and advocate for cancer research as the creator of the V Foundation.

While other hall classes have had an equal or greater collection of star power, the interconnection of this year's group is immense.

Parker won his four NBA titles playing under Popovich. Gasol won his two titles alongside Kobe Bryant in Los Angeles but played his final two years in the league with Popovich in San Antonio.

And after Hammon shined as a six-time WNBA All-Star, she became the NBA's first full-time female assistant coach under Popovich. She's since followed in her mentor's footsteps, coaching the WNBA's Las Vegas Aces to a championship last season.

Her commitment was on display Friday as she skipped the news conference to coach the Aces. She is slated to give her speech Saturday night in Springfield.

Wade battled with Popovich's teams and played under him on the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team. But he's better remembered for how he became the centerpiece of building championship culture with the Miami Heat franchise, capturing three rings along the way.

He also built a legacy of using his platform to speak out on a variety of issues from social justice to the transgender community. Wade said he and his Miami Heat teammates speaking out in 2012 following Trayvon Martin's shooting changed him.

"I felt it was time to step outside the basketball talk and step into the community talk," Wade said. "I know I have (a microphone) and everyone does not."

Another thread that runs through this year's class is how the successes of Nowitzki, Gasol and Parker influenced the influx of international players into the NBA over the past two decades.

Parker called Nowitzki – the first European-born player to win the NBA MVP award in 2007 – "the G.O.A.T" of international players.

"If I came in and helped inspire and motivate some guys along the way, that makes me incredibly proud," Nowitzki said.

Parker said watching the French national team as a kid when it was beaten by 50 points in the 1992 Summer Olympics by U.S. Dream Team helped him fall in love with the sport.

"We were like the first wave when NBA franchises decided, 'Hey, we can just (get) international players to be our franchise guys,'" Parker said. "We are the result of the Dream Team."

ZARINAE

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not progress to the next round.

In this World Championship, her main goal is to push herself and set a new 100m personal best.

The new program coordinator for the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence also competes in 200m events, with a personal best time of 27.40 seconds.

Sapong was also CNMI's representative in the 2017 and 2019 World Athletics Championships.

She also competed in two World Indoor Championships in 2016 and broke her 60m PR in the 2018 event with a time of 8.54 seconds.

PRACTICE

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great. "It's been years besides the Mini Games, but it's good to have everybody out to support and see that it's alive."

What's next? Saralu said that basically, the grind doesn't stop as they will be back on the field again this week to practice for the 2024 SBL season. "We're looking forward to it—it's still a few months ahead but why stop now?"

Saralu then said after a "Gatorade shower" from his teammates, "thank you for the continued support and the love for the players. Thanks to the umpires, thanks to everyone for coming out. It was a great season."

As for Cardinals head coach, Juan Manibusan, he said their strategy through the season was their pitching and defense. "All of our players can pitch. We started off slow, fast, slow, then fast again. Every game, we have to use all our pitchers."

With their offense, he said that most of the players were at the top of the season's offensive categories, and that "pretty much, our offense and defense were solid. Most of these guys are all stars and they've been playing for a while, plus they know each other," said Manibusan. "The team will still be the same moving forward."

CALLING

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NMIBF president James Lee said, "I understand that both government and private sectors are struggling at the moment due to our current economic situation, however, this is a perfect opportunity for both sectors to give back to their employees for all their hard work and treat this as a team building."

For any additional info for interested teams, email nmibasketballfederation@gmail.com or attend their first meeting.

Nowitzki, Gasol, Parker give international flavor to enshrinement

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)—Fans waved a German flag and chanted Dirk Nowitzki's name when he walked the red carpet into Symphony Hall on Saturday night for the Basketball Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremony. In his acceptance speech, the former Dallas big man told his parents, "Danke."

Tony Parker's fans whooped it up when he took the stage to lead off the proceedings. "There are a lot of French people in town. Sorry," the San Antonio Spurs point guard said.

Spain was well-represented, too, with Pau Gasol shouting out his national team—"mi familia"—before joining what may be the greatest international class of inductees in the Springfield shrine's history.

"I want to give a special mention to those first Europeans, who came here, across the ocean, who took a chance," said Gasol, who fell in love with the sport when the 1992 Olympics were held in his hometown, Barcelona. "I was 12. It changed my life. The Dream Team showed us how basketball could be played."

The Class of 2023 brought a distinctly international flavor to the basketball hall.

Nowitzki was the first European-born player to win the NBA MVP award, in 2007. Parker's NBA Finals MVP award that year in was the first for a European. In 2002, Gasol was the NBA's first international rookie of the year.

The Spurs were well represented, too, led by longtime coach and five-time NBA champion Gregg Popovich, and Parker, the point guard on four of those title-winning teams. Becky Hammon, who after a career in the WNBA joined the Spurs as the first woman to serve as a full-time NBA assistant coach, was also honored. Gasol played his last two healthy seasons with the Spurs.

"Coach Pop — it starts with him," Parker said.

Others enshrined include Dwyane Wade—a key piece of three NBA championship teams in Miami. He was greeted with chants of "Let's go Heat!" before asking he crowd to pipe down because Popovich had taken up too much time.

Wade asked his loved ones to stand as he thanked them, including his wife, the actress Gabrielle Union.

"Thank you for learning every ref's name in the NBA, and for screaming at them so I didn't have to," he said. "Saved a lot of fine money."

He concluded by inviting his father— Dwyane Wade Sr. — onto the stage. "We're in the Hall of Fame, Pop," he said before one final hug.

Former North Carolina State coach Jim Valvano, who led the Wolfpack to the 1983 NCAA title and went on to be a broadcaster and advocate for cancer research, was inducted posthumously.

Rounding out the class were the silver medal-winning 1976 U.S. Olympic women's basketball team; former Purdue coach Gene Keady, a seven-time Big Ten coach of the year; former Texas A&M women's coach Gary Blair, who took two teams to the Final Four; longtime coach at Amherst and two-time Division III national champion David Hixon; and Gene Bess — who won 1,300 games as a junior college coach at Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

The inductees received their Hall of Fame rings and jackets on Friday at a news conference, which Hammon missed because the Aces had a game in Las Vegas that night. In her speech, she broke down when thanking Popovich.

"I know you weren't trying to be courageous when you hired me," she said. "You changed the trajectory of my life, and so many other girls, and young women."

Undrafted by the WNBA, Hammon went on to be a six-time All-Star before joining Popovich in San Antonio. She coached the Aces to a WNBA championship last season.

"The amount of times I hear 'no' or had a door shut was the amount of times I was going to go through a chimney, or bust through a window to find a way," Hammon said. "I wouldn't change the hard parts, because the hard parts were necessary to build the courage for whatever comes next."

Popovich made light of his basketball talents and his image as a foul-mouthed media foil. He told the players presenting him to sit down and "shush." "Don't speak, just sit there," Popovich said as he took the microphone.

Turning to Parker, he said: "With Tony, I just asked him to be perfect. If I coached him now the way I did then I would be in handcuffs."

Parker smiled and nodded his head.

As a player at the Air Force Academy, Popovich said, he was frequently kicked out of practice, he said, adding with a smirk, "I know that you all know now that I am a totally mature individual."

Australia makes it through to semifinals seeking history for Matildas.

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Sports

Reluctant but resolute Popovich leads Basketball Hall of Fame class.

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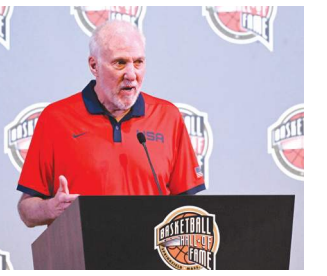

Zarinae off to World Athletics Champs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

CNMI's elite sprinter and one of Micronesia's most experienced athletes, Zarinae Sapong, is off to the 2023 World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary that's scheduled for Aug. 19-27.

Her 100m event race is set for Aug. 20.

The 25-year-old said now that it's about a week until competition, "With about a week left, I'm feeling a mix of anticipation and focus. It's the final stretch and the excitement is definitely building."

As for her preparation and training, she said "Me and coach Eli [Rangamar] have been working on a few things, looking back at my performance during the Oceania Cup and making adjustments here and there."

Sapong finished sixth overall in the Oceania Cup 100m event last June with a time of 13.20 seconds and finished seventh in the 200m race with a time of 27.37.

Her personal best in the 100m event is 12.98 seconds which she set in the 2022 World Athletics Championships held in Eugene, Oregon. Although she broke her own record, she did

See ZARINAE on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI's Zarinae Sapong is seen in her 100m race in the Oceania Cup last June at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

Practice makes perfect'

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Cardinals should change their names to "Aces" as they played their cards right and came out the ace on top of the deck with a perfect record—and the title in the conclusion of the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League season last Wednesday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

It's no secret that the idiom "practice makes perfect" is thrown around when someone is trying to be better at something, especially in sports, but to actually take it literally and come out of the season perfect is a feat that is—quite simply—unbeatable.

Therefore, Nokki Saralu, the batting champion of the season, said that practicing regularly was the difference between their team and the other teams, but he added that communication and chemistry sprinkled in completed the trifecta to their perfect season.

On being the batting champion of the season, he said "I don't really bank on the accolades. It was a team sport—so teamwork all year round."

LEIGH GASES
The Cardinals' Nokki Saralu, who is the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League batting champion, is interviewed after their championship win last Wednesday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Saralu ended the regular season with a .576 batting average from 19 hits of 33 at-bats. He also had the most runs scored with 21.

When asked for tips for the game as the batting champion, he said, "just be humble; respect the game; and practice. Practice makes perfect."

With baseball finally back in the CNMI, he said that it's

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Calling businesses, gov't entities for new league

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation is calling all businesses and government entities to sign up for the upcoming 2023 NMIBF Inter-Government/Business Basketball League beginning Sept. 18.

For those interested, the first meeting for the league is set for Aug. 29 at 5pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room.

The technical meeting and deadline for rosters, waiver forms, and entrance fees is on Sept. 14 at 5pm also at the Ada Gym.

The maximum number of teams is 10 and is a first pay first serve basis, with no reservations.

The format and rules for the tournament are as follows: It's a round robin for the regular season which is set to start on Sept. 18 and end on Nov. 2; the Top 6 teams will advance to the double-elimination rounds for the playoffs, semifinals, and finals; the roster is capped at 18, but only 15 players are active per game; players must be working for the company for more than two months; and the company must provide employment verification or rosters signed by the human resources department.

The playoffs are scheduled for Nov. 4, with the championship game set for Nov. 16.

All games will take place in the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

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LEIGH GASES
In this file photo, the CNMI's Coby Santos goes for a jump shot during a game in the 2023 "Mich" Ultra Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League last May at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.